Andrews University
Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Dissertations | Graduate Research

1982

Liberation Theology's Use of the Exodus as a Soteriological Model

Atilio Rene Dupertuis
Andrews University, dupera@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations

 Part of the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation

Dupertuis, Atilio Rene, "Liberation Theology's Use of the Exodus as a Soteriological Model" (1982). *Dissertations*. 43.
https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/43

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

Andrews University

Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

Thank you for your interest in the

Andrews University Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses.

Please honor the copyright of this document by not duplicating or distributing additional copies in any form without the author's express written permission. Thanks for your cooperation.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of "sectioning" the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

University
Microfilms
International

300 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

8318615

Dupertuis, Atilio Rene

LIBERATION THEOLOGY'S USE OF THE EXODUS AS A SOTERIOLOGICAL MODEL

Andrews University TH.D. 1982

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Copyright 1982

by

Dupertuis, Atilio Rene

All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

LIBERATION THEOLOGY'S USE OF THE EXODUS AS A SOTERIOLOGICAL MODEL

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Theology

by

Atilio René Dupertuis

August 1982

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY'S USE OF THE EXODUS AS A SOTERIOLOGICAL MODEL

A dissertation presented

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree

Doctor of Theology

by

Atilio René Dupertuis

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE

Raoul Dederen, Chairman
Professor of Historical
Theology

Lawrence T. Geraty
Professor of Archaeology
and History of Antiquity

Roy E. Graham, Professor
of Theology

Werner K. Vyhmeister
Professor of Mission

John H. Yoder, Professor
of Theology
University of Notre Dame

Gerhard F. Hasel, Dean
SDA Theological Seminary

8/4/82
Date Approved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ABSTRACT

LIBERATION THEOLOGY'S USE OF THE EXODUS
AS A SOTERIOLOGICAL MODEL

by

Atílio René Dupertuis

Chairman: Raoul Dederen

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: LIBERATION THEOLOGY'S USE OF THE EXODUS AS A SOTERIOLOGICAL MODEL

Name of researcher: Atilio René Dupertuis

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Raoul Dederen, Ph.D.

Date completed: August 1981

This investigation studies the soteriology of Latin American liberation theology particularly in the light of its use of the Exodus as a liberation model.

Chapter I briefly traces the historical and theological developments in the continent, from its discovery to the present, in an effort to provide a better understanding of the circumstances and currents of thought which led to the emergence of liberation theology.

Chapter II shows that liberation theology takes its starting point from a decided commitment to create a new and more human society, through the radical change of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the present unjust social order seen as oppressive and sinful. In its struggle on behalf of the poor and marginalized, liberation theology differs essentially from earlier forms of social Christianity where advantaged groups endeavored to express their faith in bettering the lot of the poor. Liberation theology is a movement from within the marginalized: it aims at liberation of the oppressed by the oppressed themselves. The Exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage provides the paradigmatic text *par excellence* as liberation theologians attempt to articulate their concerns.

Chapter III endeavors to demonstrate that the Exodus, though central in the faith of Israel, is not the center or foundation of all the Old Testament; it is rather an integral part of a larger story, a segment of redemptive history. Consequently, it should be viewed not only as an isolated socio-political event but also as a religious one. The liberated slaves were the covenant people of Yahweh, and the interpretation that Scripture gives to this event looks not so much to Israel's new political situation, or to her relation to the former oppressor, but rather to her renewed relationship with Yahweh and her new responsibilities to the world.

This investigation concludes that liberation theology, in spite of its timeliness and virtues, due to its absorbing preoccupation with the historical, has

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to a large extent neglected the transcendent, thus weakening the possibilities of a greater impact. In a justified reaction against an excessive verticalism in much of traditional theology, it has tended to go to the opposite extreme of an excessive horizontalism, emptying the Gospel of much of its saving content.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Dedicated to

Eunice, Norma and Ruben

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter

II. (Continued)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AsbSem	The Asbury Seminarian
AUSS	Andrews University Seminary Studies
Bib	Biblica
BibTh	Biblical Theology
BSac	Bibliotheca Sacra
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library
CalThJ	Calvin Theological Journal
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CC	The Christian Century
ChrCris	Christianity and Crisis
Chmn	Churchman
ComVia	Communio Viatorum
Conc	Concilium
CQR	Church Quarterly Review
CrossCur	Cross Currents
CT	Christianity Today
CTM	Concordia Theological Monthly
CurTM	Currents in Theology and Mission
Dial	Dialog
DialTeol	Diálogo Teológico
Encount	Encounter
ER	The Ecumenical Review

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ForAff	Foreign Affairs
Front	Frontier
HThR	Harvard Theological Review
HAHR	Hispanic American Historical Review
Horiz	Horizons
IDOC	International Documentation Service
IRM	International Review of Mission
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JES	Journal of Ecumenical Studies
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JIntThC	Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRH	Journal of Religious History
JThSoAfrica	Journal of Theology for South Africa
LADOC	Latin American Documentation
LQ	Lutheran Quarterly
LumVit	Lumen Vitae
LW	Lutheran World
Menn	The Mennonite
MQR	Mennonite Quarterly Review
Missio	Missiology. An International Review
NCW	New Catholic World
NEAsiaJT	North East Asia Journal of Theology

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

OccBulMissR	Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PerkinsJ	Perkins School of Theology Journal
PMV(E)	Pro Mundi Vita (English ed.).
RadRel	Radical Religion
RBiArg	Revista Bíblica Argentina
RefJ	The Reformed Journal
RelLife	Religion in Life
RS	Religious Studies
SE	Study Encounter
ScEsprit	Science et Esprit
SEAsiaJTh	South East Asia Journal of Theology
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SM	Sacramentum Mundi
Spfdr	The Springfielder
SWJT	South Western Journal of Theology
TD	Theology Digest
ThEd	Theological Education
TPS	The Pope Speaks
ThR	Theological Review
TS	Theological Studies
TToday	Theology Today
TyndB	Tyndale Bulletin
USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WesleyThJ	Wesley Theological Journal
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ZAW	Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZM	Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the process of writing this dissertation comes to a close, it becomes clear that I am indebted to more people than I could possibly mention. I wish, however, to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Raoul Dederen, my major professor, in whose office the idea of this project was born, for his sustained interest and help as he guided me through this project. Also to Dr. Roy Graham and Dr. Larry Geraty, members of my student committee for their help and encouragement along the way.

Most of all I am thankful to Eunice, my wife, who with untold patience and devotion typed from the first draft to the final copy of this dissertation, as well as to Norma and Ruben, our children, for their patience and understanding, when their dad devoted time that belonged to them to this all-absorbing task.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

INTRODUCTION

Posing the Problem

The rising expectation of our age in the political, social, and economic realms are only matched by its rising frustrations. In increasing numbers people today feel disenchanted, deprived, marginalized, outsiders in one way or other. Sex, race, social, political, or economic conditions are seen as the causes of their plight. Not that these conditions are unique to our historical moment, but they "have reached such an intense level of consciousness that they can no longer be ignored or set aside as unimportant by serious Christians."[1]

As an attempt to face this dark reality and to find an answer to the mounting frustrations of countless human beings, there appeared, in the late 1960s and

---

[1]Stanley Stuphin, Options in Contemporary Theology (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1977), p. 38. The Global 2000 Report to the President, a three-year U. S. Government study released in July of 1980 warns that mass poverty, malnutrition, overcrowding, food shortages, deterioration of the planet's water, and atmospheric resources is the way of the future. It concludes that "barring any revolutionary advances in technology, life for most people on earth will be more precarious in 2000 than it is now--unless the nations of the world act decisively to alter current trends" (Gerald O. Barney, ed., The Global 2000 Report to the President, 3 vols. /Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1980/, 1:1).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

early 1970s, several types of "liberation theologies." Each speaks of God as being on the side of the oppressed, and the Gospel as the good news of liberation from their particular kind of oppression.

Women's liberation theology understands oppression in terms of sexuality, and therefore stresses liberation from male dominance.[1] Black theology understands oppression as ethnic, and stresses liberation from oppression based on racism.[2] Third World[3] liberation theology sees oppression mainly in socio-

---

[1]See Rosemary R. Ruether, Liberation Theology. Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power (New York: Paulist Press, 1972); Mary Daly, Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); Letty M. Russell, Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective: A Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974).

[2]See James H. Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970); James Deotis Roberts, A Black Political Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974); Gayraud W. Wilmore and James H. Cone, eds., Black Theology. A Documentary History, 1966-1979 (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979).

[3]By "Third World" it is generally meant people living outside of the United States and Western Europe (First World) and of the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe (Second World). It "includes their descendants living in racial oppression in any country" (Russell, Human Liberation, p. 20). The expression "Third World" has economic as well as racial overtones and speaks of economic exploitation and colonialism. Walbert Bühlman prefers a geographical division, "east, west and south" (The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1978/, p. 3). And Ronald Sider points out that "changes in the last decade, and especially since tripling of oil prices in 1973, require a new division into Third and Fourth World countries. India, Bangladesh and Pakistan . . . Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania and Kenya . . .

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

economic-political terms, and, accordingly, seeks liberation from foreign dominance.[1] The influence of these more prominent types of liberation theology is already being felt in Africa,[2] Asia,[3] Ireland,[4] and in different

---

belong to the Fourth World." (Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study /Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1977, pp. 33, 34). In speaking of themselves as an oppressed class, some women have adopted the term Fourth World. See Russell, Human Liberation, p. 21.

[1]See Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation. History, Politics and Salvation (Maryknoll: N. Y. Orbis Books, 1973); Hugo Assman, Opresión-Liberación. Desafío a los cristianos (Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1971); Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976).

[2]In August 1976, twenty-two theologians from Africa, Asia, Latin America and a representative from Black North America met in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to reflect upon the significance of theology in the countries of the Third World. A number of the papers presented have been published in Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella, eds., The Emergent Gospel (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976). See pages 1-95 for different presentations on African theology.

[3]Ibid., pages 99-172 for a presentation of Asian theology--India, Hong Kong, Philipines. See also "Philippino Theology for Liberation: A Working Paper," RadRel 2:4 (1976):5-11; Yoshinobu Kamazawa, "Asian Theological Reflections on Liberation," NEAsiaJT 14 (March 1975):1-9; Choan-Seng Song, "Liberation of People in History," SEAsiaJT 19:2 (1978):14-25, and "Statement of the Asian Theological Conference of Third World Theologians," OccBulMissR (July 1979):99-101. James Cone, "Asian Theology Today: Searching for Definitions," CC 96 (1979):589-591, Douglas J. Elwood, ed., Asian Christian Theology of What Asian Christians Are Thinking, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980).

[4]Dermot E. Lane, ed., Ireland Liberation and Theology (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1977). The first section by Edna McDonah is entitled "The Challenge of Liberation Theology,'" pp. 22-33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ethnic groups within the United States.[1]

Even when the causes of "oppression" are not identical, and therefore their emphases vary, there is present, nevertheless, a common concern underlying these different perspectives. "Their common purpose is to commit Christians to radical political and social change and to transform society in order to create a new and more human world.[2] Letty Russell points out that "feminists and Third World groups share a common ground in what is coming to be called liberation theology, since both are concerned with the gospel message of liberation interpreted as good news for the oppressed."[3]

Latin America

It is understandable that these theological reflections on liberation would have their origin in Latin America, the Third World continent which is both "poor" and officially, if often nominally, "Christian." Gutiérrez points out that

---

[1]See Ignacio Castuera, "Theology and Practice of Liberation in the Mexican-American Context," PerkinsJ 29 (1975):2-11; Virgilio P. Elizondo, "A Challenge to Theology: The Situation of the Hispanic Americans," The Catholic Theological Society of America. Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention (New York: Manhattan College, 1975), pp. 163-176.

[2]Pauli Murray, "Black, Feminist Theologies: Links, Parallels and Tensions," ChrCris 40 (1980):86.

[3]Letty M. Russell, "Liberation Theology in a Feminist Perspective," in Thomas McFadden, ed., Liberation, Revolution, and Freedom. Theological Perspectives (New York: Seabury Press, 1975, p. 90.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> A broad and deep aspiration for liberation inflames the history of humanity in our days. That is the case of Latin America. This aspiration is lived with distinctive characteristics by the exploited classes, oppressed cultures and discriminated races in Latin America. 1

Until a few years ago this "deep aspiration for liberation" was not voiced in any significant way by Christian thinkers in Latin America. And for good reason, for in 1948, for example, scarcely two decades before Medellín,[2] Gustave Weigel, for many years a Jesuit missionary to Latin America, wrote that "to most theologians in North America and Europe, South America is as well known as the heart of Africa."[3] It is a fact that since its discovery almost five centuries ago, Latin America has remained for the most part "on the outskirts of history."[4] Books on history, theology, or philosophy have been written almost exclusively by Europeans--by a white hand--by men who rarely lifted their eyes beyond the borders of their own countries and, all

---

[1]Gustavo Gutiérrez and Richard Shaull, Liberation and Change (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), p. 4.

[2]In August of 1968, 150 bishops and 100 periti of the Roman Catholic Church met in Medellín, Colombia, to assess the role of the Church in Latin America in the light of Vatican II, in what is known as CELAM II, Segunda Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana. Medellín is generally regarded as the "launching pad" of liberation theology.

[3]Gustave Weigel, "Theology in South America," TS 9 (1948):561.

[4]Enrique Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation: A Latin American Perspective (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976, p. 11.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

too naturally, looked at things from their own perspectives.[1]

Things are rapidly changing, however. "After a long period of real ignorance of its own reality . . . Latin America is now progressing from a partial and anecdotal understanding of its situation to a more complete and structural one.[2]

---

[1]Dussel, the Argentine historian points this out with the work of the German church historian Joseph Lortz. Lortz, he observes, wrote a great history of the Church, but being German, he wrote a history of the Church in the German-speaking areas of Central Europe. "When Lortz gets to the era of the Reformation, he talks about Luther (he is a great expert on Luther). Then he goes on to talk about the Enlightenment, Gallicanism, Ultramontanism, and so forth. He says nothing about Latin America" (Ibid. p. 15). As recently as 1977 Klaus Van der Grijp held that "as far as the general history of the Church is concerned, Latin America belongs entirely to the Third World, that is, to the part of humanity whose history is largely determined by the history of the rest of humanity" ("The History of the Church in Latin America," LW 24 /1977/:105). It should be mentioned that at present there is a group of scholars, headed by Enrique Dussel, working on an eleven-volume General History of the Church in Latin America. Ediciones Sígueme, of Spain, is publishing the Spanish edition, and Orbis Books will carry the English one. The seventh volume of the series, the first one to be published, dealing with Colombia and Venezuela, is already available in Spanish; it has 712 pages and sells for 2.500 pesetas (This information was supplied to the author in a letter from Germán González Domingo, Director of Ediciones Sígueme, dated April 7, 1981). To say, however, that Latin America was totally ignored by historians is an overstatement. Kenneth Scott Latourette, for example, in his Three Centuries of Advance, vol. 3 of A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939), devotes more than 100 pages to Latin America. For a recent excellent discussion of Catholicism in Latin America, see Roger Aubert, The Church in a Secularized Society, vol. 5 of The Christian Centuries (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), pp. 322-381.

[2]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 81.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Weigel's evaluation of the situation in South America three decades ago helps to highlight the dramatic changes that are taking place. He stated then that South American theology "has made no transcendent contribution . . . no great movements can be discerned . . . hardly any South American name rings familiar to Northern theologians . . ."[1] He pointed out that one of the main reasons for this appalling situation was the scarcity of books. Any effort to locate the few existing ones, he noted, "may lead to some far away *convento* up in the mountains where the book needed lies hidden on the dusty shelves of an ill-kept library."[2] Besides, most of the theologians "are engulfed in a profusion of external activity, which makes quiet and constant study all but impossible."[3] Therefore--and the conclusion seems inevitable--"we have no right to expect that it /theological reflection/ will flower overnight in published studies that will rock the world."[4]

Little did Weigel imagine that twenty years later an abundance of books, articles, and mimeographed materials would be flowing from the South American presses in an unprecedented fashion,[5] and that the "profusion of

---

[1]Weigel, "Theology in South America," p. 561.

[2]Ibid., p. 565.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 566.

[5]"Since then /1971/ more than 5,000 books and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

external activity" of the theologian, seen by Weigel as a drawback to his theological productivity, would become the hallmark of his originality and creativity. In spite of Weigel's assessment, many see that this new theological movement--known as liberation theology--"does seem destined to rock the world."[1]

A Turning Point

There is a growing awareness in the Christian churches that Christianity has arrived, in its tortuous journey through the centuries, to a moment never before faced. Words like *watershed, turning point, crossroads* appear with increasing frequency in religious literature.[2]

---

articles have seen the light of day," writes Edward Schillebeeckx, "Liberation Theology Between Medellín and Puebla," (TD 28:1 /1980/:4). Roger Vekemans in Teología de la liberación y cristianos por el socialismo (Bogotá: CEDIAL, 1976), pp. 221-281 lists approximately 1200 books and articles in print on the theme of liberation theology.

[1]Alfred T. Hennelly, Theologies in Conflict: The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 23.

[2]"We stand at a difficult crossroads in the history of the Christian Church" (Douglas John Hall, Has the Church a Future? /Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980/, p. 108). Theology of the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America is the title of Orlando Costas' doctoral dissertation (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi N. V., 1976). John Sobrino, a leading Jesuit theologian wrote Christology at the Crossroads. A Latin American Approach (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1978). See Johann-Baptist Metz's provocative article, "Hope for a New Reformation. Christianity in a Post-bourgeois World," The Month 242 (1981):92-98. Says he: "It is clear that we stand at the historical terminus and the point of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For Walter Bühlmann the black clouds on the horizon of the theological world point unequivocally to "the coming of the third church,"[1] a church mainly of the Third World, which comprises the great majority of mankind, four-fifths of the inhabitants of the planet, who struggle, and often fail "to survive with the aid of a meager twenty percent of the goods of the earth."[2]

Bühlmann observes that the third church "is not something fallen from the skies," but rather that there is a "migration of the Church toward the Southern hemisphere . . ."[3] which cannot but bring tremendous implications for the Church in the First World and its present role. Robert McAfee Brown points out that "Europeans and North Americans must be ready to live with the fact that leadership in the future, theological and otherwise, is not going to come from Europeans or North Americans but from Asian, African and Latin Americans."[4]

---

bankruptcy of the bourgeois world. The current context of Christianity is that of the end of the bourgeois world and the emergence of a post-bourgeois and post-capitalistic world. In the new world, Christianity will only be able to hold on to its identity if it rapidly undergoes a second reformation" (p. 92).

[1]The Coming of the Third Church is the title of his book.

[2]Hennely, Theologies in Conflict, p. 1. See Ronald Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, chap. 2, "The Affluent Minority," pp. 39-56.

[3]Bühlmann, The Coming of the Third Church, p. 22.

[4]Is Faith Obsolete? (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), pp. 131, 132.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

When we think about theology in the Third World, obviously Latin America as an underdeveloped and Christian continent finds itself in an *avant-garde* position, and there is ample evidence that it is rising to the occasion with vigor and originality that even transcends its own borders.[1] The Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff has remarked that "the future of the Catholic Church, given the diminution of the European population, is undeniably in Latin America."[2]

Liberation Theology

Latin American liberation theology is a response to the historical reality of the continent, seen as disclosing a situation of political domination and economic

---

[1]Enrique Dussel affirms that "la teología de la liberación se transforma lentamente en teología africana, negra, latinoamericana, aunque todavía no ha surgido una reflexión desde el Asia /written in 1972/ para terminar por ser mundial y de los oprimidos en un sentido más general" (Historia de la iglesia en América Latina /Barcelona: Editorial Nova Terra, 1971/, p. 51).

[2]Jesus Christ Liberator. A Critical Christology for Our Time (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1978), p. 44. We should also note in passing the Latin population in the United States. Los Angeles with 2,500,000 Mexican Americans is considered the largest Mexican city outside Mexico City itself. Of the some twenty Spanish-speaking countries in the world which are listed in the World Almanac of 1975, the United States ranks fifth in the lineup according to population. Elizondo, of the Mexican-American Cultural Center in San Antonio, Texas, and a strong sympathizer of liberation theology, adds that there are 14,500,000 Spanish-speaking Catholics in this country, which means that "approximately 30 percent of all U. S. Catholics are Spanish-speaking" ("A Challenge to Theology," p. 64). Dussell predicts that "demographic projections based on birth rate and immigration indicate

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dependency. "The recent history of Latin America," writes Gutiérrez, "is distinguished by the disturbing discovery of the world of the other--the poor, the exploited class,"[1] a majority of people who live in extreme poverty, under subhuman conditions, caused by a world economic system that provides abundance for a few within each nation and unbearable poverty for many. These realities are interpreted as unjust and sinful. The struggle, therefore, by some Christians in Latin America to free the masses from this oppressive situation gave rise to what is now known as theology of liberation. It is basically an effort to relate the teachings of the Christian faith to the lives of the poor and oppressed. Does the Christian faith have anything to say and do for those millions who are helplessly caught in poverty and oppression? Theology, liberation theologians argue, is not necessarily right thinking about the nature of ultimate reality in order to convince the nonbeliever that God exists. According to Gutiérrez, theology has to be relevant for the suffering multitudes:

> The theology of liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new

---

that by the year 2,000, fifty percent of U. S. Catholics will be of Latin American origin" (History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 171). See also John Maust, "The Exploding Hispanic Minority: A Field in Our Back Yard," CT 24 (1980):883-884, 909.

[1]Gutiérrez and Shaull, Liberation and Change, p. 76.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> society; this theology must be verified by the practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors. 1

The goal of liberation theology, to "humanize the oppressed," can only be accomplished by changing the conditions--economic, social, political--which keep the poor poor and in servitude to the oppressors. The purpose of liberation theology is, therefore, not only to understand the world but to "change it."[2] There are not a few who see liberation theology as a *fad* and anticipate that it will soon fade away like other *fads* in the recent past. Liberation theology has met with decided opposition both in Latin America, the United States, and Europe.[3] On the other hand, there are those who maintain that "liberation theology is a genuine Christian theology . . . that it will not fade away until widespread oppression fades away, which, even on the most optimistic of

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 307.

[2] Ibid., p. 18. As Claude Geffré explains, "Latin American theology is not only a theology *of* liberation or a theology *about* liberation, but a theology which deliberately stands up *for* liberation" ("A Prophetic Theology," Concilium 6 (June 1974):13).

[2] In November of 1977, Karl Rahner, Johannes Metz, Helmut Gollwitzer, Ernest Kasemann joined a group of over one hundred German theologians who protested against an ecclesiastical campaign aimed at discrediting the theology of liberation. This "campaign" was said to have the assistance of Roger Vekemans, considered to be one of the principal opponents to liberation theology," The Ecumenist 16:4 (1978):49-51; Penny Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in John Eagleson and Philips Sharper, eds.,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

calculations, will not occur for many decades."[1] Segundo asserts that the theology of liberation "represents a point of no return in Latin America,"[2] while Beverly Wildung Harrison sees it as "the most serious, sustained and theologically informed challenge the Western, dominant Christian paradigm has so far received."[3]

Looking attentively to the "signs of the times," Buhlmann observes that

> In the course of the third millennium--who knows?--a Church historian may compare the eastern Church to the morning star, silent, glittering, ever full of hope, the western Church to the moon which after a night almost as luminous as the day, is now growing dim and the Third Church to the sun, newly risen on the horizon, ruling the day. 4

Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), pp. 20-23.

[1]Brown, Is Faith Obsolete? p. 132. Alfred T. Hennelly emphatically stated: "I believe it is of the utmost importance to recognize from the outset that this process of reflection now taking place in Latin America is not just another theological fad. Rather it represents the initial articulation of the theological understanding of the vast majority of the human race, the peoples of the Third World" ("Today's New Task: Geotheology," America 132 /1975/:27).

[2]The Liberation of Theology, p. 3.

[3]"Challenging the Western Paradigm. The 'Theology of the Americas' Conference," ChrCris 35 (1975):254. Frederick Herzog writes: "Once considered exotic and fanciful, liberation theologies now have a good chance of becoming the way ahead for theology in the next century . . ." ("Birth Pangs: Liberation Theology in North America," in Gerald Anderson and Thomas Stransky, eds., Mission Trends No. 4. Liberation Theologies /New York: Paulist Press and Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979/, p. 25).

[4]Buhlmann, The Coming of the Third Church, p. 24.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aim and Plan of the Study

The aim of this investigation is to examine the soteriology of liberation theology, especially in the light of its use of the Exodus model. The Exodus is then viewed from the perspective of redemption history rather than as a more or less isolated socio-political event, with the purpose of ascertaining whether liberation theology's contextual frame of reference allows this momentous event to yield all its salvific significance.

This study is divided into three chapters. Chapter I attempts to briefly trace the main historical and theological developments in Latin America, in an effort to provide a better understanding of the circumstances and currents of thought which led to this new theological development. Chapter II examines the soteriology of liberation theology. What do liberation theologians understand by salvation? Since the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage is overwhelmingly chosen as "paradigmatic"[1] by liberation theologians, our concentration is on their use of this Biblical model. Chapter III takes a critical look at the soteriology of liberation theology. The Exodus is viewed from the Biblical

[1] "The Exodus experience," says Gutiérrez, "is paradigmatic. It remains vital and contemporary due to similar historical experiences which the People of God undergo" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 159). See also p. 294.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

perspective of salvation history, that is, as an integral part of a larger story, in which God is working out in history his salvific purposes, rather than an isolated political event.

The first two chapters are more particularly descriptive in nature. The last one reflects an evangelical perspective,[1] which is our own tradition.

Limitations

The sheer bulk of material published in the last decade on the theme of liberation[2]--a quick glance at the Index to Religious Periodical Literature bears this out--makes it necessary to impose limits to this study. Within the different perspectives of this current reflection, attention is given only to Latin American[3]

---

[1]This includes acceptance of the normative and final authority of Scripture, and the validity of the interpretation it gives to historical events. It assumes acceptance of the supreme lordship of Jesus Christ, in whose life, death and resurrection God's revelation found its culmination.

[2]Carl Armerding observes that "the literature of liberation is now a rival to John's imagined world-filling account of all that Jesus did and taught" (Evangelicals and Liberation /Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977/, p. 43. "It is almost impossible to keep track of the countless articles, conferences and lectures on the same theme /liberation/," says Letty Russell (Human Liberation, p. 12). See supra, 24.

[3]Even here generalizations are inevitable. The term "Latin American" in itself can be misleading, since it tends to create the impression of cultural and ethnic unity which does not exist. A Latin American can be of Indian, European, Black, Asiatic, or mixed origin. Although there is a predominance of Latin languages and culture, particularly Spanish, Portuguese, and French,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

liberation theology.[1] No attempt is made to interact with other types of liberation theologies--feminist, Black, African, Asian, etc.

Since for the most part, Latin American liberation theology is a Roman Catholic phenomenon, attention is focused on its Roman Catholic expression, with only occasional references to non-Catholic thought.[2] Within

---

the millions of Indians and Blacks living in Latin America are certainly not "Latin." There are enormous cultural differences among the people of the continent. The Indians of the Andean highlands of Perú who speak the language of the ancient Incas, and whose life is little different from that of their ancestors, stand in sharp contrast to the sophisticated citizens of Lima whose background may be European. See Eugene E. Nida, Understanding Latin Americans (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974), and Victor Alba, The Latin Americans (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1969), especially pp. 3-47.

[1]Juan Carlos Scannone of Argentina distinguishes four currents of theological thought in Latin America: "1) una teología conservadora, preconciliar, cada vez menos vigente; 2) una teología preconciliar según las pautas europeas o norteamericanas progresistas; 3) la teología de la liberación en su variante más o menos influenciada por las categorías o por el método marxista de análisis y la transformación de la realidad; 4) la vertiente de la teología de la liberación que se elabora prevalentemente como teología de la pastoral popular" ("Teología, cultura popular y discernimiento," Revista del Centro de Investigación y Acción Social, 237 /1974/: 10). Main stream liberation theology, with which this investigation concerns itself, belongs to the third group described by Scannone. See also Segundo Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation: A General Survey," LumVit 33 (1978):341, 342, for a slightly different schematization.

[2]There are some outstanding Protestant theologians such as José Míguez Bonino, a Methodist from Argentina, and Rubem Alves, a Presbyterian from Brazil, with similar concerns. On the whole, however, liberation theology has made little impact on Latin American Protestantism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Roman Catholic sphere, this study pays special attention to the thought of the acknowledged spokesman of the movement, Gustavo Gutiérrez.[1] From the very beginning, Gutiérrez has been considered the leading thinker and systematic theologian on liberation theology.[2] The main point of reference is Gutiérrez' *magnum opus*, A Theology of Liberation.[3]

---

[1]Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino was born in Lima on June 8, 1928. After finishing high school, he entered San Marcos University in Lima to study medicine; beginning at the same time his studies in philosophy. After five years of study, during which time he was active in political groups at the university, he spent one semester of study in Santiago; from there he went to Europe. From 1951 to 1955 he studied philosophy and psychology at the University of Louvain. It was at this time that he began his close friendship with Camilo Torres, who arrived at Louvain in 1953 to pursue studies in social sciences. From 1955 to 1959, Gutiérrez studied theology at Lyon. In 1959 he was ordained a priest in Lima. During 1959 and 1960 he spent one semester at the Gregorian University in Rome. Since then he has lived in Lima, where he is a professor of theology in the Catholic University and a national adviser for UNEC (National Union of Catholic Students). It is from this involvement with Catholic students and working groups dedicated to social action that his "teología de la liberación" was born.

[2]In Deane W. Ferm's opinion, "one can almost say that the rest of liberation theology is but a series of footnotes to Gustavo Gutiérrez" ("South American Liberation Theology," RelLife 48 /1979/:481). Hennelly is fair, however, in his observation that many of the ideas found in A Theology of Liberation were developed by Gutiérrez in dialogue and discussion with a number of other theologians, including Juan Luis Segundo, during the decade of the 1960s. Gutiérrez' major achievement, therefore, "was to bring all these ideas together as a well organized synthesis" (Theologies in Conflict, p. 27).

[3]The book was originally published under the title Teología de la liberación. Perspectivas (Lima: CEPC 1971). It has now been translated into eight languages. Gutiérrez presented the first rough sketch of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Since it is widely recognized that Hugo Assmann,[1] Juan Luis Segundo,[2] and José Porfirio Miranda[3] have also made valuable contributions of their own,[4] they are also brought into the dialogue.

---

a liberation theology at the "Encuentro Nacional del Movimiento Sacerdotal ONIS," in July of 1968, in Chimbote, Perú. It was published the following year as "Hacia una teología de la liberación" by the MIEC Documentation Service in Montevideo. The original lecture was updated for a presentation at the Consultation on Theology and Development organized by SODEPAX, in November of 1969, in Cartigny, Switzerland, and published as "Notes on a Theology of Liberation" in "In Search for a Theology of Development: A Sodepax Report" (Lausanne, 1970). See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. xi.

[1]Hugo Assmann was born in Brazil in 1933. He studied philosophy and sociology in Brazil, and theology in Rome. He has a licentiate in social sciences and a doctorate in theology. Since 1974 he has been in San José, Costa Rica, teaching journalism at the University of Costa Rica.

[2]Juan Luis Segundo, a Jesuit priest, was born in Uruguay in 1925. He completed his philosophical studies in Argentina and his theological studies at Louvain, in Belgium. In 1963 the University of Paris conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Letters. Presently he is associated with the Peter Faber Center in Montevideo, specializing in research concerned with the sociology of religion.

[3]José Porfirio Miranda was born in México in 1928. After studying theology and economics in Frankfurt, he returned to México where he engaged in Christian Social action among the working class. It was in this context that he became interested in the study of Marx's writings.

[4]Orlando E. Costas sees Assmann as the apologist of liberation theology, and Gutiérrez as its sytematic theologian (The Church and its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World /Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1974/, pp. 221-224). J. Andrews Kirk observes that Segundo's The Liberation of Theology, since it deals with *method* rather than *content*, "will probably prove far more significant in the long run than Gutiérrez's epoch-making initial study, A Theology of Liberation" (Theology

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The following procedure is followed in the use of sources. All material used in the text of the dissertation is quoted in English. The English translation of a non-English source, if available,[1] is given preference; in the event that none is available, our own translation is provided.

When material other than English is used in footnotes, for which no English translation is available, it is quoted in the original language.

Scripture quotations are from The New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

Encounters Revolution /Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1980/, p. 118).

[1]Orbis Books should be given credit for doing an outstanding work in the publication of books related to liberation theology, in the quantity of the books published and the quality of the translations.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND TO LATIN AMERICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Historical

Latin America Today

Almost half a millennium after Columbus set foot in the New World, America--Latin America, in particular--is being rediscovered. In the last thirty years we have observed "the beginning of a re-discovery of Latin America, in its geographical immensity and in all its complexity, political, ethnic, cultural, economic, historical, religious and touristic."[1] The sudden appearance of an abundance of published materials testifies to this fact.[2]

But, strangely enough, as Latin America emerges after five centuries of relative silence, it emerges as a puzzle. According to Germán Arciniegas of Colombia, there are two Latin Americas, not just one: the visible and the invisible.

---

[1]D. Luis González, "Encounter of the Church with the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America," PMV (E) 52 (1974):3.

[2]Gary MacEoin wrote in 1971: "Twenty years ago . . . nobody read books about Latin America" ("Books about Latin America," CrossCur [1971]:352). See the complete article, pages 352-362, where he discusses some of the events that awakened interest in Latin America. Leopoldo

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Visible Latin America is the Latin America of the presidents, generals, embassies, newspapers, business houses, universities, cathedrals, *estancias* and *haciendas*. But in the shadows lies mute, repressed Latin America, a vast reservoir of revolution. . . . Nobody knows what these . . . silent men and women think, feel, dream, or await in the depths of their being. In recent years, invisible Latin America has begun to stir. 1

A persistent yearning for social justice, for privileges long denied is being perceived increasingly within all groups of "invisible" Latin America: among *campesinos*, Indians, the masses in general. All seems to indicate, however, that the gap between the rich and the poor, between the "haves" and the "have-nots," is steadily widening.[2] The fact that Latin America is a "Catho-

---

Zea, Latin America and the World (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969) calls attention to the increasing role Latin America is playing in the world scene. For a useful bibliography, see Manfred K. Bahmann, "A Bibliography of Latin America," LQ 22 (1970):99-100.

[1]Quoted in Louis M. Colonese, ed., Conscientization for Liberation (Arlington, Va.: Goodway Printing Co., 1971), p. 224.

[2]This is true not only of Latin America but also worldwide. Two centuries ago the average per capita income of the richest countries was perhaps eight times greater than that of the poorest. But today's average U. S. citizen has an income level a hundred times that of his counterpart in Bangladesh. "India's per capita income went from about $64 in 1953 to $100 in 1973, while in the United States the figures from those years jumped from $2,100 to $5,015" (Arthur Simon, Bread for the World / New York: Paulist Press, and Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975/, p. 45). Even though this book written by the Executive Director of Bread for the World is aimed at the general public, it contains an abundance of facts and statistics that make the book very informative. See also Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, especially part one, "Poor Lazarus and Rich Christians," pp. 28-56.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lic" continent makes things even more complex.[1]

Renato Poblete points out that Latin America is "a continent of baffling paradoxes that may be resolved only if viewed in the light of the past."[2] Perhaps "resolved" should be taken to mean "understood," since few leading thinkers in Latin America see any easy or short term solution to the "baffling paradoxes" of the Christian continent. The Chilean theologian Pablo Richards has insightfully observed that the debate about the theology of liberation will be understood only when it is transformed into a great debate on the history of Latin America, including the history of the Church and its theology since its discovery.[3]

The purpose of this chapter is not to engage in a great debate on this history of Latin America, but rather to trace, in rapid strokes, some of the most

---

[1]Robert Conway makes the following observation, writing in the National Catholic Reporter: "Universally acclaimed as a Catholic Continent, Latin America is a series of contradictions. . . . The vast territory of Latin America continues to confound and confuse. If such a region is overwhelmingly Catholic, then it should be able to point with pride to its strong Christian faith and practices, to its solid family life and to the resultant numerous vocations. But such is not the case" ("Latin America's Pattern: How the Church Has Changed" /February 2, 1979/, p. 19).

[2]"The Church in Latin America: A Historical Survey," in Henry A. Landsberger, ed., The Church and Social Change in Latin America (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), p. 39.

[3]"Liberation Theology and Current Politics," LADOC 6 (July-August, 1977):32.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

significant historical and theological developments, the minimal historical context, as a backdrop against which to better understand the emerging theology of liberation.[1]

Beginnings

America, as we think of it, did not exist prior to the fifteenth century. It was on October 12, 1492, when Latin Europe and indigenous America officially met on the shores of an island in the Bahamas, that Latin America was born.[2] The influence of the mother country in the new world was strong and lasting, even though, in some aspects, Spain itself did not have much to offer at that time. Herring has summarized it thus:

> Spanish America was created out of the bone and blood and muscles of sixteenth-century Spain--a Spain that

---

[1]For a detailed study see: Enrique Dussel, Historia de la iglesia en América Latina: Caminos de liberación latinoamericana I: Interpretación histórica de nuestro continente latinoamericano. (Buenos Aires: Latinoamérica Libros, 1971); Poblete, "The Church in Latin America," pp. 39-52; Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America. From the Beginnings to the Present (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1968).

[2]Columbus and the early *conquistadores* believed that the natives were *Indians*. The great captain died in 1506 without a clear conception of the discovery he had achieved, dreaming that Cuba was part of the mainland at the far end of Asia. See on this topic Salvador de Madariaga, The Rise of the Spanish American Empire (New York: Macmillan Co., 1947), especially chap. 1, "The Spaniards and the Indians," pp. 3-11; Herring, A History of Latin America, especially chap. 2, "Discovery and Conquest," pp. 119-149; and Dussel, Historia de la iglesia en América Latina, pp. 79-80.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> was economically beggared, with her soil rutted and depleted, her hills stripped of trees, her people poor in goods and promise; but a Spain rich in ideas, mighty in religious convictions, justifiably proud of her place in the world. 1

But the Spain of the sixteenth century was itself the result of a long struggle. The year of the discovery of America was also the year in which Spain conquered Granada, was finally unified, and the king and queen accepted both the New World and the victory over Mohammed as gifts from God. The struggle against the Moslems, which had dragged long and painfully for eight centuries, with victory at last, could not but mold the Spaniard into a special kind of individual.[2] Elizondo points out that the Spaniards, after eight centuries of warring

---

[1]Herring, A History of Latin America, p. 87. On conditions in Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, notice Francisco Guicciardine's vivid and critical description: "The kingdom is thinly populated: . . . Wool, silk, wine, and oil are exported in large quantities. There is sufficient wheat for the home market, and, if the nation were only industrious and given to trade, their iron, steel, copper, hides, and other products would make them rich. But as it is, the country is very poor . . . from the laziness of the people. They are proud, . . . dislike foreigners, . . . are more warlike, perhaps, than any other Christian nation; and prefer to die rather than submit to shame. . . . Spaniards are thought to be shrewd and intelligent, but they are not good in liberal and mechanical skills; all the artisans at the king's court are French, or foreigners of some sort. . . . Spaniards are fond of show; wear fine clothes abroad; but at home, in the house, they live in beggardly fashion hard to believe. . . ." (Quoted in J. Fred Rippey, Latin America. A Modern History /Ann arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968/, p. 42).

[2]For a comprehensive discussion on the Spaniards, and the forces that shaped them, beginning from the thirteenth century when they began to call themselves *español-*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

against the Moslems, "had no choice but to become a fighting people, highly individualistic, and proud of the fact that they had been especially chosen by God to fight against the pagans."[1]

It should be observed that even when the Moslems were finally conquered and driven out of Spain, their influence, in many respects, was left as a permanent legacy to their conquerors. As a result of the Moors' presence in Spain, the Spaniards are not a completely Western people, especially in that they make inseparable the idea of nation and religious faith. In this respect, Castro observes that "today's Spain is closer to Israel and the Moslem countries than to any other Western nation."[2] And Mackay stresses this fact when he observes that

> The Cross had vanquished the Crescent, but ere the latter disappeared for ever from Iberian shores, the fanaticism of the Moslem had been injected into the

---

les, see the work of Américo Castro, The Spaniards: An Introduction to Their History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

[1]"A Challenge to Theology," p. 167. There were, of course, other influences shaping the "Renaissance man" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, like capitalism, the ideals of humanism, the Protestant Reformation. This new man appeared as highly individualistic and was increasingly concerned with this world and its values.

[2]Américo Castro's "El pueblo español," in Beatrice Pratt and Martin Nozick, eds., Spanish Literature Since the Civil War (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1973). Also, idem., La realidad histórica de España, rev. 3d. ed. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1966).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> followers of Christ. . . . Ferdinand and Isabel, the conquerors of Granada, willed that the united Spain should be only for Christ and Christians. That same year the Jews were expelled from the Peninsula. 1

The Conquest

As soon as Spain had recaptured the land from the invading Moors, expelled the Jews, and restored unity throughout the peninsula, it began the conquest of the Indians--to fight against the "infidels" had become part of Spain's own life.[2]

In his dream to discover the route to India, Columbus participated deeply in the mystic fervor of the Catholic kings. He regarded his discovery as the clear fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. In the discovery of the Indies--so he thought--"it was not reason nor mathematics nor charts that helped me; the discovery was simply a fulfillment of what Isaiah had said."[3]

---

[1]John A. Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ: A Study in the Spiritual History of Spain and South America (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932), p. 23. See especially chap. 1, "The Iberian Soul," pp. 3-22.

[2]For a first-rate discussion on the conquest, see Francisco Morales Padrón, Los conquistadores de América (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975). His stated purpose is not polemics or interpretation but "síntesis objetiva" (p. 11).

[3]Quoted in Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ, p. 24. He had in mind Isa 60:9: " . . . and the ships of Tarshish will come first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them. . . ." Mackay observes that "the great sailor's ambition was to bring from the newly discovered lands the amount of money necessary to equip an army of 10,000 cavalry and 100,000 infantry, and with these organize an expedition to the Holy Land to rescue Jerusalem from the Turk" (ibid.).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In his treatment of the Indians he manifested a mixture of motives--high missionary zeal, on one hand, and, on the other, thirst for conquest and riches. In describing his first voyage, he noted that the natives were willing to exchange valuable things for trifles, but that he forbade giving them mere trifles and gave them beautiful and pleasing things, "in order to win their affection, and that they might become Christians and inclined to love our King and Queen . . ."[1] On the other hand, he took back on his first voyage several aborigenes, part of Spain's booty, and paraded them through the streets of Seville and Barcelona, provoking a spirited controversy.[2] After the second voyage, Columbus dispatched a cargo of five hundred Indians to be sold in Spain.[3]

---

[1]Christopher Columbus, "Letter to Raphael Sánchez" (written on March 14, 1493, on his way back to Spain--Sánchez was the king's treasurer), in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., Writings of Christopher Columbus. Description of the Discovery and Occupation of the New World (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1892), p. 29. Columbus gives in this letter of nearly twenty pages a very detailed and vivid account of his adventure in the New World, especially of his encounter with the Indians.

[2]See Hugo Latorre Cabal, The Revolution of the Latin American Church (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), pp. 4-6.

[3]Morales Padrón indicates that the crown authorized the sale, in April of 1495, "pero al día siguiente se ordenó que el dinero de la venta fuera retenido, pues los reyes estaban preocupados de conciencia y deseaban saber la moralidad de su acción por boca de los teólogos" (Los conquistadores de América, p. 36). Soon the queen, unhappy with the whole situation, ordered the Indians to be sent back to Hispaniola. See John Edwin Fagg, Latin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

What about those who accompanied Columbus and who were responsible for the conquest? When one studies the history of the conquest, even that written by the sympathizers of the adventure, one easily discovers that the *conquistadores* were not usually motivated by high Christian principles. It is a well-known fact that the people who came in the early period of the conquest belonged to the "common" people.[1] Mackay, rather pointedly, observes that

> The Spaniards who shared Columbus' adventure across the ocean were in truth adventurers and nothing more, men whom the eight centuries in which the Re-conquest lasted had educated in the following three principles: first, that it is pleasing to God to kill and rob unbelievers; second, that warriors and priests form the noblest social class (as in India); third, that work is debasing, and that the land belongs to the crown and the nobility who conquered it, and to the Church which sanctions and shares its possessions. 2

America: A General History (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963), pp. 95-99.

[1]Morales Padrón observes that in the first voyage came a few "malhechores, a base de conmutarle las penas . . . En el tercer viaje ordenó la corona que todos los castigados 'a destierro' debían serlo en la isla Hispaniola" (ibid. p. 92).

[2]Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ, p. 29. It becomes difficult to deny, to a certain extent, the validity of those observations. For a definite apologetic work on Spain's conquest of America, see Julián Juderías, La Leyenda Negra. Estudio acerca del concepto de España en el extranjero (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1974). He quotes Gomara approvingly: "La mayor cosa, después de la creación del mundo, sacando la encarnación y la muerte del que lo crió, es el descubrimiento de las Indias," (p. 86). See on this subject Rufino Blanco-Fombona, El conquistador español del siglo XVI (Madrid: Editorial Mediterráneo, 1956), and Salvador de Madariaga, The Rise of the Spanish American Empire (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Poblete, in his balanced evaluation of the *conquistadores* and their work in the New World, largely agrees with Mackay's rather unfavorable observations.[1]

Treatment of the Indians

The subject of the pre-Hispanic indigenous population in what is now known as Latin America is a source of debate among specialists.[2] Detractors and champions of the Spanish *conquistador* take opposite sides: the first group calls in question the Spanish conquest and colonization while the second rejects the idea of a great indigenous race living in America in pre-Columbian times.[3] The estimates of the number of aborigenes

---

[1]"The Spanish conquerors," Poblete observes, "were proud, ambitious, and often avaricious men whose treatment of the conquered Indians was too often divorced from Christian principles" ("The Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Indies," A. Curtis Wiglus, ed., Colonial Historic America /New York: Russel and Russel, 1963/, pp. 148-166).

[2]For a discussion of this topic see Angel Rosenblat, La población indígena y el mestizaje en América, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Nova, 1954), and R. Barón Castro, "La población hispanoamericana, 1492-1950," Cuadernos de la historia mundial (UNESCO, 1959), vol. 5, pp. 325-343. González offers a convenient comparative table with the findings of these authors in "Encounter of the Church," p. 5. For a discussion on the different schools concerning the origin of the natives in America, see Phillip Ainsworth Means, "The Native Background in Latin American History" in Wiglus, Colonial Hispanic America, pp. 67-115. It includes an extensive bibliography.

[3]For an excellent discussion of these two tendencies, see Dussel, Historia de la iglesia, pp. 86-90. The author concludes that those who oppose the Black Legend, those who defend the role of Spain in the New World and see it as positive, "se apoyan para ello más en la letra

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

living in Latin America at the end of the fifteenth century vary between 8,000,000 and 48,000,000.[1]

Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566), an ardent defender of the Indians, wrote about his personal observation in Hispaniola and neighboring islands:

> . . . all of them were, as we saw with our own eyes, densely populated with native people called Indians. This large island /Hispaniola/ was perhaps the most densely populated place in the world . . . all the land so far discovered is a beehive of people; it is as though God had crowded into these lands the great majority of mankind. 2

All seem to agree, however, that the indigenous population decreased speedily soon after the discovery and conquest[3] and see the transplant of the decadent European feudalism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries into America under the form of the *encomienda*[4] as one of the

---

de las leyes y los documentos que en la realidad" (p. 89).

[1]See González, "Encounter of the Church," p. 5.

[2]The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 37, 38. Columbus himself was impressed by the fact that "the many islands" he discovered were "thickly populated" ("Letter to Raphael Sánchez," p. 34).

[3]Dussel, the Argentine historian, affirms that the Indian population in México alone had been reduced from more than 11,000,000 in 1532 to 1, 125,172 in 1595 (Historia de la iglesia, p. 85). Covering a different period, John Hemming calculated that there were nearly 3,000,000 natives in Brazil at the end of the fifteenth century; now there are about 10,000. Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 492.

[4]See González, "Encounter of the Church," p. 5. The *encomienda* consisted of giving the colonizers rights over the land and over the Indians that occupied the land. They could exploit the land by means of the unpaid work

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

main causes. Las Casas estimated in 1536 that in less than half a century, more than twelve million men, women, and children had been slain by the Christians in their uncontrolled thirst for gold.[1] The Spaniards were, according to him, extremely cruel in their treatment of the Indians, as if they were not human beings.[2]

The suggestion has also been made by some that one of the reasons for the decline of the Indian population was the epidemics introduced by their conquerors.

---

of the Indians. In exchange for this economic benefit, the *encomendero* was required to provide for the Christianization of the Indians. See Padrón, Los conquistadores, pp. 35-37, who observes that "Cristóbal Colón había querido imponer un tributo a los indios como súbditos que eran de la corona sin mucho éxito. Implantó entonces la encomienda; es decir repartió los indios entre los españoles (1499)" (p. 36). For a detailed study of this topic, see Leslie B. Simpson, The Encomienda in New Spain (Berkeley: University of California, 1966).

[1]Las Casas, The Devastation, pp. 41, 42. The entire book is a passionate exposure of the abuses perpetrated by the *conquistadores*. It is written by a man who for more than fifty years--since 1514--devoted his life to the protection of the Indians. Not a few believe that Las Casas was given to much exaggeration. See, for instance, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, El P. Las Casas y Vitoria (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966), especially pp. 49-64, where he speaks of the tendency to exaggerate in Las Casas as *una norma anormal*.

[2]Bartolomé de Las Casas, History of the Indies (New York: Harper & Row, Pub., 1971), p. 94. Las Casas' suggestion to import Negro slaves from Africa to replace the Indians in the mines and in the plantations is well known. It must be stated that very soon he "repented" of his mistaken stance. This fact is observed by the historian of Black slavery in the United States, John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, 3d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), pp. 112, 113.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Indians simply were not immune to such European diseases as small pox, influenza, measles, typhoid, and malaria.[1]

Justification of the Conquest

The *conquistadores* came to the New World under the strong conviction that God had given the Indies to Spain,[2] and that it was their holy duty to take possession of it. They made little distinction between the "idolatrous" Indians and the infidel Turks. They not only took possession of the land but also evangelized the Indians. These two goals became very closely intertwined --"the domination of the land and its inhabitants under the temporal power of the crown, and the evangelization of the people by their incorporation to the Church, the

---

[1]David M. Traboulay, "Christianity and the Struggle for Justice in the New World," ZM 59 (1975):94. In the heat of the controversy, Bernardino de Sahagún wrote in 1576--ten years after the death of Las Casas--that the rapid decline of the Indian population was "due not so much to the ill-treatment meted out to them but by the pestilences that God sends out to them." Quoted by González, "Encounter of the Church," p. 34. This statement would give credit to the fact that epidemics--whether sent by God or brought by the *conquistadores*--were a factor in their decline.

[2]"Martín Fernández de Encino, inspirándose en la Biblia, expuso que Dios había concedido las Indias a España igual que concedió a los judíos la tierra prometida. Por eso Josué requirió a los de Jericó y como no le dieron la ciudad los mató y quitó sus tierras" (Padrón, Los conquistadores, p. 42). Mackay has a useful discussion on "The Mystic Motive of the Conquest," in The Other Spanish Christ, pp. 23-28.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

spiritual power of the kingdom."[1]

The Indians facilitated the task of the *conquistadores* by being, according to Las Casas, "gentle and humble, extremely poor, defenseless, very simple, and above all, long-suffering and patient."[2] The natives were meek and patient, very easy to subject.[3]

There is little doubt that one of the "reasons" for the Spanish conquest of America was the deep-rooted conviction that "the Indies" were a gift from God to Spain, which entailed privileges and responsibilities.[4] It was legitimate for the king of Spain to conquer the Indians so that it would be "easier to instruct them later in the faith."[5] Early in the sixteenth century, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a renowned champion of the Spanish conquest and colonization, argued that the Indians were by nature inferior to the Europeans, and

---

[1]Dussel, Historia de la iglesia, p. 88. "¿Quién duda--dice Fernández de Oviedo--que la pólvora contra los infieles es incienso para el Señor?" (Padrón, Los conquistadores, p. 66).

[2]Las Casas, History of the Indies, p. 7.

[3]Las Casas' description of the natives agrees with Columbus' own evaluation, as found in his "Letter to Raphael Sánchez": "They /the Indians/ go always naked as they were born, with the exception of some of the women, who use the covering of a leaf . . . they are timid and full of fear" (p. 39). "They exhibit great love toward all others in preference to themselves" (p. 40). "I did not find, as some have expected, any cannibals amongst them, but, on the contrary, men of great deference and kindness" (p. 46).

[4]See La Torre Cabal, The Revolution, pp. 7, 8.

[5]Gutiérrez, Liberation and Change, p. 67.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

hence ought to be their slaves.[1] The Spanish social, economic and political supremacy was based mainly on this assumption.[2] The concept was also widespread that the Indians were debased, steeped in vice, "masters of gluttony, drunkenness, sexual excesses. . . ."[3] The legend was created that the Indians were "savages," which meant that they had stagnated and were in a process of degenerating, never having achieved "civilization." The Indians had no religion, only "superstitions"; they did not speak languages, just "dialects"; they were "polygamous"; they practiced "human sacrifices"; they worshipped "demons" and they were were polytheistic.[4]

---

[1]This distinction into two classes of human beings was based on one of Aristotle's famous texts. He had said that "for that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule. . . . It is clear then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right" (Aristotle, Politics, in The Works of Aristotle /Chicago: William Benton, Publishers, 1952/, pp. 447, 448).

[2]As an illustration, mention could be made of the fact that in the seventeenth century the term *limpieza de sangre* was introduced in Mexico, whereby students had to present a certificate to prove that both of their parents were of pure Spanish stock. See Traboulay, "Christianity and the Struggle," pp. 102-104.

[3]Herring, A History, p. 153.

[4]González, "Encounter of the Church," p. 8. See pages 7-9 for an interesting discussion of "Western Myths about the Indian." In 1537 Pope Paul III issued the bull *Sublimis Deus* which declared officially that the Indians were rational creatures, capable of self-government, and that they should not be enslaved. This bull clearly indicates that the myth of the irrationality and inferiority of the Indians had successfully been advocated.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Effects of the Conquest

It is only natural that the Spaniards, who accepted the supremacy of Spanish civilization and Christianity as a matter of fact, who were "handicapped" by a superiority complex, by laws and customs fashioned by European Catholicism, and "ignorant of the cultural heritage and values of the New World's indigenous peoples,"[1] would feel that the Indians should become Christian and "Spanish." On the basis of this assumption not even the pro-Indian reformers felt uneasy about the Christianization and westernization of the Indians.

The Spain which came to America in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the Spain of medieval Christendom, consequently the "heathen" were "evangelized" with a Catholicism rigidly bound to the Middle Ages. These facts could not but have a telling effect on those who were affected by them. Thus, in the conquest, colonization, and Christianization of Latin America, it was clearly assumed that the culture of the aborigenes was inferior. Traboulay has rightly remarked that "in the papal authorization for the creation of a Christian

---

See. S. Poole, "The Church and the Indian in Latin America," New Catholic Encyclopedia, 17 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967) 7:447.

[1]Penny Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary, eds., John Eagleson and Philips Sharper (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

colonial empire, there existed implicitly the justification for inferiorizing the culture of the Indians."[1]

When a representative of the Incan monarch visited Pizarro on the Peruvian coast, Pizarro told him pointedly:

> We come from Castile, where reigns a most powerful king whose vassals we are. We set out with the intention of bringing into subjection to our King the lands which we find. It is our chief desire to make you realize that you worship false gods, and that you need to adore the only God, who is in heaven. Those who do not adore Him nor keep His commandments will go to be burned in the eternal fire of hell, and those who accept Him as Creator of the world will enjoy everlasting bliss in heaven. 2

With this attitude and conviction on the part of the Spaniards, evangelization to a great extent meant that the Indians were in fact "conquered and domesticated in the name of Christ and the gospel."[3] Our common vision of the conquest is that of the conqueror, since stories of war are usually written from his point of view.

---

[1]Traboulay, "Christianity and the Struggle," p. 95.

[2]Quoted in Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ, pp. 33, 34. The Spaniards finally met with the Inca Atahuallpa. He was instructed to submit to Pizarro, who came in the name of the king of Spain and of the pope. Then Valverde, the Dominican friar, handed him a copy of the Bible. The Inca took the Bible, and with anger threw it on the ground. This "blasphemy" was the signal for Pizarro and his men "to begin a massacre which eventually destroyed one of the great civilizations of the pre-Columbian America" (Friedhelm Hardy, "Despair and Hope of the Defeated--Andean Messianism," RS 11 /1975/:257).

[3]Orlando E. Costas, "Liberation Theology: A Solution?" Menn 93 (1978):434.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For the Indians the conquest was something quite different, it was a tragedy.[1] They were forced to abandon their own history and traditions and accept Western history and values.

Another characteristic of the Spaniard, which became an integral part of the syncretic religion of the Indian, is his fatalism. What must happen, happens. Thus, children do not die of malnutrition, it is God's will that they should die . . . poverty is a condition of birth, not something that can be changed by individual or collective endeavor."[2] Hope is placed on some better

---

[1]For an illuminating discussion with a different perspective of what the conquest meant to the Indians, see the chapter entitled, "La conquista desde el conquistado," in Padrón, Los conquistadores, pp. 158-171. See also Hardy, "Despair and Hope of the Defeated," pp. 257-264. Hardy shows how the memory of the events of the conquest, especially the death of Atahuallpa in 1532, has survived to the present day, mainly in the Peruvian folklore. The coming of the Spaniards symbolized "the end of an aeon and return to chaos" (p. 258). Usually the greed of the Spaniard for gold and silver is referred to as the motive for the conquest, and the fact that the last Inca was unable to read appears as the cause which triggered the murder. Hardy concludes that these "memories" provide the rationale for many of the Indians' attitudes. Even school, "perceived to be part of the system" introduced by the conquerors, is resisted in some areas (p. 263). Elizondo, having in mind especially the Aztecs, argues that their defeat was not only military, but theological as well: their gods had lost out. Consequently, the Indians lost interest in life and simply wanted to die. This is the reason why the efforts of the missionaries to convert them were met with so little result. Elizondo compares the task of those missionaries to the one of a "U. S. military chaplain trying to evangelize the survivors of Mai-Lai--an evangelical contradiction" ("A Challenge to Theology," pp. 168, 169).

[2]Lernoux, "The Long Path," p. 5. A conscious effort is seen on the part of liberation theologians to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

hereafter; on earth everything is clearly preordained.

As a direct corollary of this, the Spaniard tended to be distrustful of the efficacy of effort, of manual labor especially. Earlier we noticed Mackay's observation that one of the things that the Spaniards "learned" in their struggle against the Moors was that "work is debasing."[1]

Violence, one of the sicknesses that engulfs Latin America, came to the New World to a large extent with the *conquistadores*. "The killing and torture--the total disregard for human rights in a majority of the Latin American countries--can be understood only when

---

help free the masses from this "legacy" if they are going to play their assigned and indispensable role in their own liberation. Gutiérrez wrote very positively in 1974: "the wretched situation in which the vast majority of Latin American peoples are placed has ceased to be regarded as a kind of historical fatality" ("The Praxis of Liberation and the Christian Faith," LumVit 29 /1974/:376).

[1]MacKay, The Other Spanish Christ, p. 29. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, a respected Argentine statesman and president of his country from 1868 to 1874, made the following comparison between North American and South American civilizations: "Yankee civilization was the work of the plow and the primer; South American civilization was destroyed by the cross and the sword. They learned to work and to read, here we learned to idle and to pray" (Quoted in Leopoldo Zea, The Latin American Mind /Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963/, p. 82). Elizondo admits that many people in the United States view "the Hispanic Americans as backward, superstitious, lazy . . ." ("A Challenge to Theology," pp. 170, 171), a judgment that is frequently applied to Latin Americans as well. Enrique Dussel, with his characteristic bluntness, points out that Latin America will not accept that the poor are lazy. They are poor "not because they want to be but because they are the victims of a system whose benefits go to those making this judgment" (Ethics and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

seen through the prism of colonial Spain and Portugal."[1]

Independence from Spain

Latin America was born "dependent," formed and shaped by the events that transpired in Europe; the conquest being "nothing more than oppression."[2] At the same time, the first three centuries of Spain's presence in the New World, however, gave origin to a particular social class, the creole aristocracy,[3] which would play a

---

the Theology of Liberation /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1978/, p. 22).

[1]Lernoux, "The Long Path," p. 5. This does not mean that there was no violence or war among the Indians before the conquest--the presence of well-fortified fortresses testifies to their reality--but historical facts indicate that Spain's thirst for gold and glory led the *conquistadores* to acts of violence and abuse that far exceeded in cruelty what happened among the "pagan" Indians. For a discussion on war and violence among the Aztecs, the founders of one of the most outstanding pre-Columbian empires, see Benjamin Keen, Readings in Latin American Civilization, 1492 to the Present (Boston: Houghton Miffin Co., 1967), pp. 9-23. Violence was mainly associated with human sacrifices. Says Keen, "An important object of warfare /among the Aztecs/ was the procurement of captives to be sacrificed on the altars of the gods whose good will brought victory to the Aztec banners" (p. 10). In pages 23-38 the author discusses the way the Incas built their empire, on a systematic conquest of the other tribes.

[2]Dussel, Ethics and the Theology of Liberation, p. 10. The author adds that "the conquistadors or *encomenderos* may have felt legally entitled to the gold and may have cheerfully gone about their work but they were despoilers nonetheless, thieves sending home goods to the center. This economic rape began when Columbus first arrived in the West Indies and saw that there was not gold there; he captured a few Indians and took them off as slaves" (p. 9).

[3]The Creoles were the sons of Spaniards born in America. Many of them were possessors of great wealth, especially owning extensive *latifundios*. They were not,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

decisive role in the subsequent history of the continent.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century it was customary for the young Creoles to go to Europe for their education; there they came in contact with the liberal ideas that as a result of the intellectual renewal in Europe and the French Revolution had spread throughout the Old World and were "infected" with the concept of freedom and emancipation.[1] In the early nineteenth century, movements to achieve political independence from Spain and Portugal, inspired largely by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, swept over most of Latin America.[2] When the colonies achieved their independence, it was the creole aristocracy that took the reins in the new nations.[3]

---

however, on equal footing with the "pure blood" Spaniards who alone had access to the key positions in the colonial government, as well as to the bishoprics.

[1]See C. C. Griffin, "The Enlightenment and the Latin American Independence," in Arthur P. Whitaker, Latin America and the Enlightenment (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 119-143.

[2]Argentina achieved its independence in 1810, Chile in 1817, Perú and México in 1821, Brazil in 1822, Cuba, the last nation to become independent, in 1898.

[3]We should keep in mind that the independence movements in Latin American nations were for the most part revolutions carried out by the creole oligarchy; it was not a revolt of the masses. As Dussel has pointed out, "This group /the creole oligarchy/ suffered most directly from the influence of Spain and wanted to free itself from that influence" (History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 99). Its power was very limited in a system where Latin America was governed by a bureaucracy under the tight control of Spain.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Neocolonialism

Political independence, as already indicated, did not mean real independence for the masses. Political independence from Spain only replaced Spanish colonialism with English-dominated "neo-colonialism."[1] The Latin American nations sold raw materials to the industralized nations and bought from them manufactured goods. "With the complicity of the local ruling classes," observes Gutiérrez, "former colonies had entered the capitalist system--as victims."[2] Míguez Bonino, the Argentine Methodist liberation theologian, points out that

> The relative diversification and self-sufficiency of an agrarian economy was replaced by a monoculture of those products which were necessary for a metropolis: Argentina was supposed to supply corn and meat; Brazil, coffee; Chile, saltpeter and copper; the Central American countries, banana; Cuba, sugar; Venezuela, oil, and so on. 3

It remains true, that the dreams of the Latin American people have not been realized after a century and a half of independence.

The present century has seen a shift from Europe to the United States as the center of domination over Latin America. At the end of World War II, the United States found itself in the enviable position of the vic-

---

[1]Already at the end of the eighteenth century, England was achieving commercial supremacy in Latin America as Spain's influence was weakening.

[2]Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 236.

[3]José Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology in a Revolu-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

torious nation.[1] In Latin America, at the same time, the situation was desperate. According to a report of the United Nations in 1952, two-thirds of the Latin American population was physically undernourished--to the point of starvation in some areas. One-half of the population was suffering from infectious or deficiency diseases. About one-third of the working population continued to remain outside of the economic, social, and cultural pale of the Latin American community. An overwhelming majority of the agricultural population was landless. Most of the extractive industries were owned or controlled by foreign corporate investments, with a considerable part of the profits being taken out of the Latin American countries.[2]

The situation hardly improved in the ensuing years. According to some, in the area of social progress the plight of the masses worsened with increasing

---

tionary Situation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 14.

[1]See Social Justice and the Latin American Church (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), p. 23, where Marcos Kaplan, the Argentine economist, discusses how the United States emerged in 1945 fully capable of exercising world hegemony.

[2]United Nations, Informe preliminar sobre la situación social del mundo (New York: U. N. Publications, 1952). The twenty-five years that followed this report, have brought hardly any significant change to Latin America. For an evaluation of how Latin America "looked" in 1971, see Marcos Kaplan, "Economic Aspects of the Latin American Crisis," in Luis M. Calonnesse, ed., Conscientization for Liberation (Washington: Division for Latin America. United States Catholic Conference, 1971), pp. 242-266.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

repression.[1] Situations vary, in some cases substantially,[2] from one country to another, while, in general, the gap between the poor majority and the elite minority is widening. Brazil, the largest nation in Latin America, has been much celebrated in recent years for its "economic miracle." According to the figures of the military government, one quarter of Brazil's population of over 100 million is "indigent and destitute." No less than 70 percent of the national income flows to the highly privileged 20 percent of the upper echelons of society; whereas 40 percent of the population survive on a family income of less than US $840 a year in a market of internationalized prices. "One can extrapolate this appalling imbalance with relative safety to most other Latin American countries."[3]

The facts speak for themselves, and few would deny that the conditions in most of Latin America are far from acceptable. There is little agreement, however, concerning the diagnosis of the origin and cure for

---

[1]See Lernoux, "The Long Path," p. 25.

[2]Argentina's per capita income is about nine times greater than that of Haiti. See Ronald H. Chiclote and Joel C. Edelstein, eds. Latin America: The Struggle with Dependence and Beyond (New York: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1974), p. ix. The entire book contains a detailed study of the economic situation and prospects of six Latin American countries: Guatemala, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Cuba.

[3]Aaron Sapsezian, "Ministry with the Poor," IRM 66 (1977):4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these ills. Some prefer a peaceful process;[1] others, revolution.[2]

From Development to Liberation

During the 1950s and 1960s Latin America was generally considered an integral part of the "Third World," which also means "under-developed."[3] There were, at the

---

[1]Dom Elder Camara, Archbishop of Recife, Brazil, is the best known advocate of the cause of the masses in Latin America. He tirelessly works for social change, but holds that armed revolt, though "legitimate," is not the answer in Latin America. He is an admirer of Martin Luther King and believes in "peaceful violence." His main ideas and strategies can be found in his book, Revolution through Peace (New York: Harper & Row, Pub., 1971). See also the work of Bishop Alfonso López Trujillo, former secretary-general and currently president of CELAM, Liberation or Revolution (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1975).

[2]For the majority of the liberation theologians who believe that social revolution is the answer to Latin American problems, Camilo Torres is a main source of inspiration. A priest turned guerrilla, he was ambushed and killed in the little town of El Carmen, Colombia, on February 15, 1966. His writings may be found in Camilo Torres Revolutionary Writings (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969). For a detailed study of Torres see El Padre Camilo: el cura guerrillero (México: Editorial Nuestra América, 1968). For a succint analysis, see Harold E. David, Revolutionaries, Traditionalists, and Dictators in Latin America (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1973), pp. 75-79. Gustavo Gutiérrez is clear in expressing his conviction that for Latin America "revolution rather than reform" is the only alternative ("Two Theological Perspectives," p. 240).

[3]The concept of "Third World" countries was promoted at the Bandung Conference of 1955. The Third World was defined to include those peoples and areas which belonged neither to the developed capitalist economy of the West nor to the block of Communist nations. The Third World was defined further as "underdeveloped," still in need of development. This conference also implied "a kind of moral obligation on the part of the wealthier and more powerful nations to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

same time, high expectations of an imminent breakthrough when the exploited nations of the continent would finally be able to catch up with the West and its advanced industrialization. "The decade of the 1950s," observes Gutiérrez, "was marked in Latin America by a great optimism in the possibilities of achieving economic development."[1] The word "development" was on everyone's lips in the early 60s. U Thant, secretary general of the United Nations, inaugurated the "First Development Decade."[2] John XXIII spoke of his concern for the development of

---

aid and stimulate this process of 'development'" (Monica Hellwig, "Liberation Theology: An Emerging School," SJTH 30 /1977/:137). For a specific study of Latin America and underdevelopment, see Development Problems in Latin America. An Analysis by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970).

[1]Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Theology of Liberation," TS 31 (1970):248. The answer was seen in repeating the experience of the developed countries, trying to avoid the slowness of their first experiences. At this stage, the work of Walt Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), became very influential.

[2]The complete text of U Thant's address at Copenhagen, Denmark, inaugurating the first Development Decade, can be found in U Thant, Toward World Peace. Addresses and Public Statements 1957-1963 (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), pp. 152-193. He stated his goal thus: "This year we are beginning a wholly new experiment in human cooperation. Over the next ten years, the United Nations and its specialized and associated agencies are pledged to mobilize their past experiences and coordinate their present efforts in a sustained attack upon the ancient enemies of mankind--disease, hunger, ignorance, poverty--to lay the foundations in all developing lands for a more modern and productive economy. This is the broad purpose behind the Decade of Development" (p. 153).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the poorer countries in his encyclicals *Mater et Magistra*[1] and *Pacem in Terris*.[2] In 1961 the "Alliance for Progress" was launched by president John F. Kennedy in the midst of great hopes and anticipations.[3] Soon, however, frustration set in, in spite of apparent success in some areas. Neeley observes that "the widespread change in attitude toward the development mystique appears to have arisen rather abruptly, i.e., between 1963 and 1966."[4]

Persistent questions were raised regarding the virtues of the development model which promised much but delivered very little. Reality seemed to indicate that

---

[1]The complete text of *Mater et Magistra*, delivered on May 15, 1961, can be found in Joseph Gremillion, ed., The Gospel of Peace and Justice. Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 143-199.

[2]For the complete text of *Pacem in Terris* delivered on April 9, 1963, see ibid., pp. 201-241.

[3]The documents that gave birth to the Alliance for Progress were signed at Punta del Este, Uruguay, on August 17, 1961, marking the culmination of a laborious process in which all the countries forming the Organization of American States took an active part. See the work of Warren Nystrom and Nathan A. Haverstock, The Alliance for Progress. Key to Latin American Development (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1966). Already in 1964 Alberto Lleras Camargo, former president of Colombia and former secretary-general of the O.A.S., wrote a pointed evaluation of the Alliance, advising the United States that "foreign policy does not always have to produce direct material benefits . . .; it may be conducted as a sort of long-term investment, extending perhaps through several generations, at a great risk. . . ." "The Alliance for Progress: Aims, Distortions, Obstacles" (ForAff 42 /1964/:37).

[4]Allan Neely, "Liberation Theology in Latin America: Antecedents and Authochthony," Missio 6 (1978), 348.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dependence of the Latin American nations on the United States was increasing rather than decreasing; and that the unusual economic growth experienced in some geographic areas--in Brazil for example--benefitted the wealthier economic strata almost exclusively, while two-thirds of the population found themselves further from their goals than before. Soon after the launching of the Alliance for Progress, its failure was already apparent. The chasm between the developed and the underdeveloped world was growing. Foreign investment was taking out of Latin America far more than it was investing. Production could not cope with the increase of population and thus the number of marginals continued to increase.[1]

As the decade progressed, social studies began to question the appropriateness of the development-underdevelopment model in which

> The underdeveloped countries thus were considered backward having reached a lower level than the developed countries. They were obligated, therefore, to repeat more or less faithfully the historical experience of the developed countries in their journey towards modern society. 2

---

[1]See Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 25. Soon people began to make puns of the "para" in "Alianza para el Progreso." As a preposition *para* means "for," but as a verb, it means "stop, impede." So the Alliance for Progress became the "Alliance that stops progress."

[2]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 82. The conviction grew among economists and theologians that the industrial societies could not serve as models for development. Paul Loffler echoes this sentiment when he observes that "for the underdeveloped countries to become like the so-called developed industrial countries is both unrealistic and undesirable. For one thing, the develop-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The more radical critics began to talk of development as a new form of colonialism.[1] The conviction grew that the development of certain societies was based on the resources of the "colonized" societies; the latter, in fact, being indispensable for the development of the first. The reason for the failure of the plans for developing the Third World, it is believed, is the inherent economic need of the developed nations to keep the underdeveloped nations underdeveloped.[2] Míguez Bonino sums up

---

ment of the industrial countries depended and continues to depend on the economic exploitation, for instance, of raw materials and energy, of the so-called underdeveloped countries" ("Mission in Context: In Search of a Theological Perspective on Development" ThR 2 /Nov. 1979/: 17).

[1]By the mid-sixties some North American economists were raising serious questions regarding the virtues of the development model. The book published in 1966 by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order (New York: Monthly Review Press), contained convincing evidence of the growing monopolization of the economy by the United States. It began to be widely quoted in Latin America and confirmed many in their misgivings about the development model. See Neely, "Liberation Theology," pp. 348-350, for a good exposition of the economic philosophy of antidevelopmentalism. One of the best studies on the Latin American attitude toward this problem is by the Brazilian economist Celso Furtado, Obstacles to Development in Latin America (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970). Furtado's thesis is that development and underdevelopment are both parts of the same process, the unprecedented spread of modern technology. Gutiérrez, in A Theology of Liberation, pp. 92-96, cites a number of contemporary studies on development/dependence.

[2]In 1966, Andre G. Frank wrote a caustic essay entitled "The Development of Underdevelopment" whose very title encapsules the thesis of antidevelopmentalism. For Frank the "present underdevelopment of Latin America is the result of its centuries-long participation in the process of world capitalistic development" (Latin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the emergence of the new consciousness:

> Development and underdevelopment are not two independent realities, nor two stages in a continuum but two related processes: Latin American underdevelopment is the dark side of Northern development; Northern development is built on third-world underdevelopment. 1

The conviction grew in Latin America that development was not even a possibility for the poor because their underdevelopment "is due to their systematic despoliation by the nations of the center."[2] The underdeveloped countries sell their raw materials at lower prices, while the cost of manufactured products sold by the developed nations becomes more expensive.[3]

Consequently, the basic categories for understanding the Latin American reality were no longer seen as development/underdevelopment but rather as domination/dependence, a dependence that is even more complex than the one outlined by Míguez Bonino. Not only do richer

---

America: Underdevelopment or Revolution. (New York, London: Monthly Review Press, 1969), p. 7.

[1]Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 17. See also Pierre Bigo, The Church and Third World Revolution (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1977), especially chap. 2, "Dependence," pp. 29-38.

[2]Enrique Dussell, "The Political and Ecclesial Context of Liberation Theology in Latin America," Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella, eds., The Emergent Gospel. Theology from the Underside of History (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1977), p. 183.

[3]In 1937 Brazil, for example, had to export fourteen sacks of coffee in order to import one automobile; in 1967, it had to export forty. René Laurentin, Liberation Development and Salvation (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1972, p. viii.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nations exercise domination over the poorer, but within the poorer countries themselves, the masses of poor and powerless are dominated by a small, affluent elite which has established an "unholy alliance" with foreign interests. Ureta points out that

> The Latin American context is the situation of dependence in which the continent lives. Dependence of the center, and within the frontiers of each country, acute and sustained dependence at all levels by oppressive oligarchies. 1

It became obvious that the way of understanding and changing the history of Latin America could not be development because the real cause is not underdevelopment; and if the situation is one of dominance and dependence, then liberation becomes the only real answer. Only a radical break from the present structures, from the *status quo*, a social revolution that would break the actual dependence, was seen as the sole working alternative. Gutiérrez wrote in 1976

> The Latin American poor seek to eradicate their misery, not to ameliorate it; hence they choose social revolution rather than liberalization. These options, which seem to the ruling classes utopian, are utterly rational to the oppressed. 2

Thus, by the end of the sixties--the decade that

---

[1]Floreal Ureta, "Algunas reflexiones acerca de la teología de la liberación," DialTeol 12 (1978):30.

[2]Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 240. For a very useful study on the shift of approach --from development to liberation-- see Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, especially pp. 1-83. See also Keith Griffin, Underdevelopment in Spanish America: An Interpretation (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was to signal a new beginning for Latin America--it had become clear that the continent was not on its way to development, as millions had enthusiastically expected. On the contrary, the gap between the rich and the poor countries continued to widen, and dependency had deepened. The good intentions of the United Nations did not translate into any tangible results, and pessimism again became the dominant mood in the continent. In 1970, the Chilean Joel Gajardo, in terse words, expressed the feelings of many when he said: "If this is what one decade of development does for us, spare us from another."[1]

As the decade of the sixties progressed, religious leaders, sensitive to the plight of the masses, and with scarcely any sign of hope on the horizon, began to raise questions regarding the role of the Church in the seemingly hopeless condition of the continent.[2]

---

[1]Quoted by Gary MacEoin. Revolution Next Door. Latin America in the 1970s (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 1. MacEoin, with little sympathy for U. S. policies toward Latin America, evaluates the continent as it emerged from the Development Decade. See also Luiz A. Gómez de Suza, "Latin America in the Third World of the World," in Colonnese, Conscientization for Liberation, pp. 267-280.

[2]It is of interest to note Nelson A. Rockefeller's appraisal of the Church, already in 1969, as he reported to President Nixon on his fact-finding mission to Latin America. The Church "is a force dedicated to change--revolutionary change if necessary . . . with a profound idealism, but as a result, in some cases, vulnerable to subversive penetration; ready to undertake a revolution if necessary to end injustice" (The Rockefeller Report on the Americas. The Official Report of a United States Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere /Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969/, p. 31). Interestingly enough

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Is there any "good news," they persistently asked, or is fatalistic resignation the only way? Roman Catholic thinkers, mainly, began to take a fresh look at their Church, its theology, and especially its development in Latin America in its five centuries of history for answers and orientation. In the next section we will take a brief look at this development.

Theological

Colonial Christendom

Even though in Roman Catholic--as well as in Protestant--circles theology in Latin America, for the most part, historically has been a repetition of what was said in Europe and the United States and, consequently, little new was developed, there are, nevertheless, some characteristics that are peculiar to the continent.[1]

---

the latter section on "Policy and Action"--covering 80 pages of the 144-page report--does not mention the Church, suggesting that in the eyes of the presidential envoy the Church did not have anything to offer by way of solution.

[1]Enrique Dussel, the Argentine historian has written profusely on this topic; his most thorough discussion is found in Historia de la iglesia en América Latina. See also History and the Theology of Liberation, "The Political and Ecclesial Context of Liberation Theology in Latin America," in Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabella, eds. The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Underside of History (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 175-192; "Sobre la historia de la teología en América Latina," in Enrique Ruiz Maldonado, ed., Liberación y cautiverio. Debates en torno al método de la teología de la liberación (México: Comité Organizador, 1975), pp. 19-68; and Richard, "Liberation Theology and Current Politics," pp. 31-53.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gutiérrez opens his book, A Theology of Liberation, with a brief glance at the first fifteen centuries of Christian theology discussing "the classical tasks of theology," which traditionally centered around two poles, i.e., "Theology as Wisdom" and "Theology as Rational Knowledge."[1] Theology as Wisdom was predominant during the period of the early Church, and it was clearly linked to spiritual life. Theology as Rational Knowledge, according to Gutiérrez, originated in the twelfth century and reached its zenith with Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, leading finally to a total separation of theology and spirituality by the scholastics of the fourteenth century. Theology as Rational Knowledge gave rise in the scholastic approach to a passive attitude, whose interest was to maintain and explain truths already possessed. The emphasis was on systematization and clear exposition.[2] The sixteenth century--the beginning of colonization of Latin America--was one of intense theological activity for the Roman Catholic Church as it tried to cope with

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 3-6.

[2]Gutiérrez sums up the outcome of the scholastic approach by quoting José Comblin, "Scholastic theology will thus gradually become, especially after the Council of Trent, an auxiliary discipline of the magisterium of the Church. Its function will be: (1) to define, present and explain revealed truths; (2) to examine doctrine, to denounce and condemn false doctrines, and to defend true ones; (3) to teach revealed truths authoritatively" (p. 6). It should be noticed that Gutiérrez regards both these classical expressions of theology as valid and permanent tasks of theology, but points out that both approaches have suffered deformations throughout history.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the challenge presented by the Reformers. After Trent the Church emerged, at least in theory, "as a highly centralized body."[1] The Council of Trent, just at the moment when new missionary ideas were needed, fearfully closed tight the doors to all possible experimentation.[2] Consequently, Spanish Catholicism, when it came to Latin America, was "rigidly bound to the Middle Ages." It was to a large extent an extension of the Western European Catholic Church.[3]

Thus the first period of Latin American history, from 1492 to the end of the eighteenth century, can properly be called the period of "Colonial Christendom,"[4] the

---

[1]Justo L. González, A History of Christian Thought, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 3:351.

[2]Conway observes that as a result of Trent "Church teachings were to be couched in the phraseology of the scholastic philosophy; the liturgy, the sacraments, all were to be dispensed in Latin" ("Latin American Pattern," p. 19).

[3]Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," p. 4. Latin America, during the first three centuries after the discovery, received very little influence from the Renaissance and the Reformation, the two movements that took shape in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe and marked the transition between the medieval and the modern. See W. Stanley Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), and Mariano Picón-Salas, De la conquista a la independencia. Tres siglos de historia cultural hispanoamericana (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1969).

[4]See Richard, "Liberation Theology and Current Politics," pp. 32, 33. Dussel subdivides this long period into five sections: (1) Primeros pasos, 1492-1519; (2) Las misiones de Nueva España y Perú, 1519-1551; (3) La organización y el afianzamiento de la iglesia, 1551-1620; (4) Los conflictos entre la iglesia misionera y la civilización hispánica, 1620-1700; (5) La decadencia

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

continent became Christian as it was colonized. There was a prophetic current confronting the conquest and evangelization.[1]

Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos (d. 1545) is generally considered the first to raise his voice on behalf of social justice in Latin America[2] and the spiritual father of Bartolomé de Las Casas (d. 1566) who for fifty years worked tirelessly protecting the Indians in the New World.[3] Gutiérrez observes that Las Casas

---

borbónica, 1700-1808. Historia de la Iglesia, pp. 91-115. It is true that the Church was faced with changing times and new developments, but its fundamental approach to the new problem remained very much the same during these three centuries.

[1]Some clear voices were raised during this period in opposition to the prevalent belief--theologically "justified" by a Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, for example--of the natural inferiority of the Indian. Among the most illustrious names, mention should be made of Antonio de Montesinos (d. 1545), Bartolomé de Las Casas (d. 1566), José de Acosta (d. 1600) in Perú, and Bernardino de Sahagún (d. 1590) in México. See Dussel, "Sobre la historia de la teología," pp. 34-38.

[2]On the Sunday before Christmas, 1511, Montesinos delivered his first public protest against the abuses the Indians were subjected to by the Spaniards. According to Las Casas, who heard Montesinos that Sunday morning, the friar thundered in such terms that the congregation trembled as if facing Judgment Day. "Tell me," cried the friar, "what right do you have to enslave them? . . . Aren't they human beings? Have they no rational soul? . . . You may rest assured that you are in no better state of salvation than the Moors or the Turks who reject the Christian faith (Las Casas, History of the Indies, p. 184). Lewis Hanke, The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949) discusses the work of these "pioneers." The first chapter contains excerpts from Montesinos' sermons.

[3]Las Casas devoted fifty years of his life to protect the Indians; he felt called by God to this mission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

followed a new and fruitful path when he insisted that social justice was one of the demands of the Gospel, and established a link between salvation and justice.[1]

Their efforts, however, had little impact at that time. During this period of "Colonial Christendom," the two powers, Church and State, worked closely together: while the sword opened up a new path, the cross carried the Christian culture to the New World.[2]

He wrote, "God deigned to choose me as his minister . . . to try to restore all those peoples of what we call Indies . . . to the pristine freedom of which they have been unjustly robbed, and to *liberate* them from the violent death which they are still forced to endure." (Quoted by Enrique Dussel, "Historical and Philosophical Presuppositions of Latin American Theology," in Rosino Gibellini, ed. Frontiers of Theology in Latin America (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979, p. 185). Emphasis added.

[1]Liberation and Change, pp. 62-63. In pp. 61-65 Gutiérrez has a fuller discussion of Las Casas' contribution to the concept of social justice in Latin America.

[2]Due to its very nature and the immensity of the task facing the Catholic Church in the New World, it became primarily a proselyting organization that made "conformists" out of the Indians rather than "converts." For an interesting evaluation of the work of the Catholic Church in Latin America, see J. H. McLean, The Living Christ for Latin America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board Publication, 1976); Eugene A. Nida, Understanding Latin Americans with Special Reference to Religion, Values and Movements (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974), especially chap. 6, "Christo-Paganism," pp. 106-124. The Latin American bishops, in the final document of their meeting at Puebla in 1979, admitted that "in Latin America this Catholic Piety of the common people has not adequately impregnated certain autochtonous cultural groups and ones of African origin. Indeed in some cases they have not been evangelized at all" ("Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future," Final Document, Art. 451). A complete English translation of this document can be found in Eagleson, Puebla and Beyond, pp. 122-285.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Tensions in Colonial Christendom

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Church found intself facing a completely new situation brought about by the proliferation of independent movements and the creation of new nation-states.[1] The new political developments in the New World meant a serious setback for the Catholic Church and its vision of a "Christian" Latin America. Many of the bishops, who had been appointed by the king by virtue of the *patronato*,[2] decided to return to Spain, leaving the Church in a state of confusion.[3]

---

[1]This movement posed the first serious break in the monotonous regularity of colonial life. These events were the result of a ferment that was evident in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Many teachers had studied in Europe, specially in France, and brought with them ideas that were current there at that time, thus allowing the Englightenment to play an important part in the independence movements. See Roland D. Hussey, "Traces of French Enlightenment in Colonial Hispanic America," in Whitaker, Latin America and the Enlightenment, pp. 23-51. By French Enlightenment Hussey means ideas that developed mainly in France, based upon the rejection of classical authority, upon insistence on the need for experimental investigation, and upon the need to accept the conclusions of such experimentations, even when they conflicted with earlier cherished beliefs.

[2]From 1492 on, a series of bulls conceded by popes who needed King Ferdinand's support made the Church in Spain almost a national organization, subject to Rome only in matters of doctrine. The government collected tithes, supervised ecclesiastical affairs, and nominated Church officials. These powers were known as *patronatd real* and were later used extensively within the Spanish colonies. See John Edwin Fagg, Latin America: A General History (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963), pp. 58-61.

[3]Most of the thirty-two bishops and six archbishops had been born and educated in Spain. See Kirk, Liberation Theology, p. 9. At the same time, it should

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The governments in the new states were of liberal tendencies; the Church, in order to safeguard its institutional life, sought to ally itself with the conservative party and adopted a defensive attitude,[1] while the new political leaders continued to look to Europe for ideological inspiration. Attracted by the teachings of nineteenth century liberalism, they tended to look with sympathy to the anti-clerical features of that ideology[2] and placed their concerns mainly in political considerations.

---

be pointed out that many of the Creole clerics enthusiastically embraced the emancipating cause. Dussell observes that in México very few priests sided with the revolution, while in Argentina "la acción del clero fue decisiva, y no sólo apoyó el movimiento, sino que fue una de sus causas" (Historia de la iglesia, p. 153). For a fuller discussion see K. Schmidt, "The Clergy and the Independence of New Spain," HAHR 34 (1954):189-312.

[1]This attitude naturally gave rise to the hostility of the already not-so-friendly liberal parties and led them to adopt an increasingly anticlerical stance, which for the first time led to a clear distinction between the two powers, Church and State. This dichotomy between "conservador" and "liberal" became central: the first went out in support of the Catholic Church, the latter showed little sympathy to it. For a series of excellent essays on this issue, see Frederick B. Pike, ed., The Conflict between Church and State in Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), especially J. Lloyd Mechan, "A Survey of the Church-State Conflict in Latin America during the First Century of Independence," pp. 164-171.

[2]Later in the century, and in some countries more than in others, Positivism became very attractive, especially as popularized by the works of August Comte (1798-1857). Since Positivism proclaimed the sovereignty of reason and was hostile to metaphysics and theology, it was to be used as an instrument to change the mentality of the people. One of the best studies on the influence of Positivism in Latin America can be found in Zea, The Latin American Mind, pp. 135-289.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Strongly influenced by rationalism and positivism, these new leaders felt that colonial customs and values rendered Latin America ill-prepared for achieving national economic maturity and developing democratic institutions. Since economic growth was one of their priorities, to many of them it seemed all-important to instill in the citizens materialistic incentives, competitive instincts, and the capitalistic drives associated with the individualistic pursuit of wealth.[1] Others, however, questioned the importance given to material development and sought to emphasize non-material, spiritual rewards for the masses. Churchmen, by and large, favored the second ideological school; by the 1850s clergymen were espousing the social philosophy of *paternalism*.[2]

It can safely be said that the nineteenth century saw a marked decline in the temporal strength and the intellectual influence of the Catholic Church in Latin America.[3]

---

[1]Aubert, The Church in a Secularized Society, p. 323.

[2]The principle that the government should supply the needs and regulate the conduct of the governed, on the assumption that it can best secure their highest welfare, was evident in the Church's belief that the natural social order called for the existence of an immobile lower class, whose rise within the social order would threaten the providentially established hierarchical order. Eternal salvation was the reward of all social classes, and this was emphasized. For an excellent discussion of the role played by the Church during this period, see ibid., pp. 325-329.

[3]Richard points out that during this period

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It should be noted, however, that the erosion of the temporal power suffered by the Church in its encounter with liberalism had some "healthy consequences," in that it began to move slowly into a more positive social action.

Early Twentieth Century

It was in 1891 that Leo XIII's[1] encyclical *Rerum Novarum*[2]--the first papal social encyclical--appeared.

"colonial Christendom enters into a long process of decomposition ("Liberation Theology and Current Politics," p. 33), and Dussel observes that during most of the nineteenth century, Roman Catholic theology in Latin America was "Conservative Neocolonial theology on the defensive" ("The Political and Ecclesial Context," p. 176). It should be noted that the Church was not facing this problem in Latin America alone. In Europe, as well, ideas stemming from the Enlightenment had greatly affected the vitality of Roman Catholic theology, to the point of, to use the expressive words of Mark Schoff, the queen of sciences "bore the crown but could not impose her will" (A Survey of Catholic Theology. 1800-1970 /New York: Paulist Newman Press, 1970/, p. 21). This book presents an excellent analysis of the development in late Roman Catholic theology in Europe.

[1]Leo's pontificate lasted from 1878 to 1903. He is remembered as the " workingman's pope" and the originator of the modern social teaching of the Catholic Church. He took the reins of the papacy at a difficult moment. When Pius IX died on February 7, 1878, after a long and stormy pontificate, "the Catholic Church seemed to be in a losing feud with the whole modern world, intellecually, politically and worldly. Its influence . . . was fast disappearing. . . . It appeared impotent to dyke anywhere the flood tide of 'science,' liberalism, Marxism, anti-clericalism, and secularization" (Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1900 /New York: Harper and Bro., 1941/, pp. 141-142). For an excellent study on Leo XIII, see Edward T. Gargan, ed., Leo XIII and the Modern World (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961).

[2]An official translation of this encyclical, entitled "On the Condition of Workers," has been published by National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C., 1942.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lambolay evaluates *Rerum Novarum* as a "revolutionary encyclical that stunned the world with its call to dignity and social justice for the working classes."[1] It supported the right of workers and employers to organize and stated that the wages of a worker should be enough to allow him and his family to live in comfort. It also asserted, against the rising tide of socialism, the right to private property and its inheritance; it rejected socialism, because it denied people this right and made them tools of the state.

It should be noted, however, that this epoch-making encyclical had little, if any, contemporary influence. Its effects would be felt decades later.[2]

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Catholic Church was about to undergo a resurgence in

---

[1]Lathryn Lambolay, "Leo XIII, 'the Worker's Pope,' Favored Unions," NCR (Sept. 7, 1979):37.

[2]Juan Luis Segundo seems to overstate his case when he argues that, in general, *Rerum Novarum's* influence was minimal. He contends that if we compare the content of this encyclical with that of the *Communist Manifesto*, we find in both the same strong condemnation of the inhuman aspects of capitalism. But that if we compare the results of the two statements, a striking difference is discovered: "from Marx's *Manifesto* there followed profound change in Western society; from Leo's encyclical, no radical change at all" ("Social Justice and Revolution," America 118 /1968/:576). The significance of this encyclical could be seen, to a certain degree, in the fact that forty years later Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*, and John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* seventy years later, reapplied its principles to new situations in the world. John XXIII calls *Rerum Novarum* the "magna carta for the reconstruction of the economic and social order" (*Mater et Magistra*, Art. 26).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Latin America. Efforts by Rome to strengthen the Church in Latin America[1] coincided with reaction against the materialism that had dominated the continent. Prominent Latin American intellectuals joined in a reaction against positivistic and utilitarian concepts.[2] In increasing numbers religious leaders became persuaded that if higher human values were to prevail, they required a theological basis.[3]

---

[1]One of the most influential thinkers of this period that reacted against the current philosophical views was José Enrique Rodó (1871-1917). Among his many books, Ariel, an essay on the nature of democracy, is the best known. See Emir Rodríguez Monegal, ed., José Enrique Rodó. Obras completas (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967).

[2]In 1899 the first council of Latin American prelates was convened in Rome by Pope Leo XIII, with the purpose of propping the waning influence of the Church in the continent. Thirteen archbishops and forty-one bishops made their way to Rome to attend what was the first "Continental Congress" in the Church's history. See P. Correa León, El Concilio Plenario Latinoamericano de 1899: Cathedea (Bogotá: n.d.).

[3]Not all countries participated to the same degree in this change of orientation. In México, for example, after the Revolution of 1910, anticlerical sentiments and atheistic sympathies remained high. In Uruguay, where the Church's influence was never strong and where agnosticism was popular, the resurgence of the Church was limited. In some other countries, like Colombia, Perú, and Chile, the renewal was much more noticeable. See the discussion by Frederick B. Pike, "South American Multifaceted Catholicism: Glimpses of Twentieth-Century Argentina, Chile and Perú" in Henry A. Landsberger, ed., The Church and Social Change in Latin America (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), pp. 53-75.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Neo Christendom

The world economic crisis of 1929 that brought the fall of many liberal governments as its consequence found the Catholic Church in clear recuperation, showing new signs of vitality and with a view to structuring a "new christendom."[1]

The increasing social tensions and dissemination of radical ideas, e.g., anarchism, socialism, and communism, led the Latin American episcopacy to organize the laity into Catholic Action groups.[2] The purpose of Catholic Action was to awaken the social conscience of the upper classes and to induce them, under Church leadership, to take measures aimed at easing the material suffering of the masses.[3] By this time, and when the effects

---

[1]The loss of power by the anti-Catholic liberals gave the Catholic Church new breathing space, and it renewed its efforts to "reconquer" the continent on the basis of the autonomy of the temporal power. Dussel's evaluation of this "new Christendom" as an effort "to restore the Christendom that had almost disappeared during the period of liberal persecution" (History and the Theology of Liberation, /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976/) seems to be an overstatement.

[2]Pius XI inaugurated Catholic Action in 1922, with the encyclical *Ubi Arcano*, and gave to Catholic Action its classical definition as "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy." He tended to use the expression restricted to "(1) action or work of the laity, which was (2) organized, (3) apostolic, and (4) done under a special mandate of the bishop" (D. J. Geaney, "Catholic Action," New Catholic Encyclopedia, 3:262). In Argentina and Chile the Catholic Action was organized in 1931, in Uruguay in 1934, in Costa Rica and Perú in 1935, in Bolivia in 1936. See Dussel, "The Political and Ecclesial Context," p. 178.

[3]See Aubert, The Church in a Secularized Society,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of a worldwide depression were keenly felt, Pius XI's[1] encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*,[2] appeared, reiterating the themes of *Rerum Novarum* but being more radical than its predecessor--especially in its attitude toward capitalism--while at the same time being softer in its denunciation of socialism.[3] Theology at this juncture became structured on "the distinction of planes,"[4] in which the

---

p. 347. Movements of social action began to proliferate in the 1930s, with the stated purpose of carrying the application of the evangelical message to all social spheres. See on this topic, Vekemans, Teología de la liberación, pp. 23-26. Dussel characterizes the accomplishments of Catholics as a "lukewarm 'social' struggle" ("The Political and Ecclesial Context," p. 178).

[1]Pius XI's pontificate lasted seventeen years (1922-1939).

[2]This encyclical was signed on May 15, 1931, in the tenth year of Pius XI's pontificate. An official English translation, under the title "Reconstructing the Social Order," was published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C., in 1942.

[3]It states, for instance, that a person's "superfluous income" is not left "wholly to his own free determination" (Art. 50); speaks of just distribution of wealth (Art. 57); protests "an immense power and despotic economic dictatorship . . . consolidated in the hands of a few" (Art. 105); contends that socialism had changed "profoundly" since Leo's times (Art. 111) and, "like all errors, contains some truth." But it clearly warns that "no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist" (Art. 120). Its emphasis on social issues was so innovative that even the relatively progressive Chilean Church of the early 1930s withheld publication of the encyclical for two years. See Conway, "Latin American Pattern," p. 19.

[4]In his A Theology of Liberation Gutiérrez has a section entitled "The Distinction of Planes," pp. 56-61. The Church's mission was not in "construction of the world--this was the layman's responsibility--but "evangelization and inspiration of the temporal sphere." For the priest "to intervene directly in political action was to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Church and the world are autonomous entities with their own respective goals. This kind of theology clearly distinguished between the "temporal" and the "spiritual"; the layman was responsible for the temporal, worldly, and political, while the priest's realm was the spiritual.[1] With the recognition of the autonomy of the secular world, the layman was called to fulfill a function that was hardly recognized before as his. This function was largely based on Maritain's famous distinction: "to act as a Christian and to act as a Christian as such."[2] The special task of the Catholic layman would be to work for the creation of a New Christendom in the temporal sphere. In other words, the layman would assume his own responsibilities as a Christian, without making the Church as such accountable for his actions.[3]

---

betray his function" (p. 57). A good implementation of this approach is found in López Trujillo's Liberation or Revolution, which, though written in 1975, examines the priest's role in Latin American society.

[1]See Dussel, "Sobre la historia de la teología," pp. 47-48. Dussel underlines that this theology of the New Christendom was not academic but militant. It was not directly political but "dualista en aquello temporal-espiritual, Estado-Iglesia como sociedades perfectas cada una en su nivel y no conflictivas" (p. 98).

[2]Jacques Maritain, True Humanism, 6th ed. (London: Goffrey Bless, and New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954, p. 291. Maritain, while not the originator of this distinction, has strongly influenced some liberation theologians.

[3]This new attitude would allow the laity to be politically active in parties of "Christian inspiration."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Developmentalist Theology

The Second World War brought new challenges. Key among them was the awareness of the reality of underdevelopment that affects the greater part of humanity. The 1950s and 1960s saw the proliferation of development theories. Parallel with these developments, there arose a developmentalist theology.[1]

So, for example, there arose in Chile in 1963 the "Falangist" group--without links to the Spanish group of the same name--which after the Second World War was called Christian Democracy, and in 1964, one of its members, Eduardo Frei, was elected president of the country. For a discussion of three of the most important Christian Democratic Parties--Uruguay, Chile, and Venezuela--see Robert J. Alexander, "The Emergence of Modern Political Parties in Latin America," in Joseph Maier and R. W. Weatherhead, eds., Politics of Change in Latin America (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Pub., 1964), pp. 101-125. Besides, the laity could be active in labor unions of Christian inspiration, thus the Latin American Confederation of Christian Syndicates (CLASC) was organized. The Church aimed at recovering the power it had lost in the nineteenth century, through the work of dedicated people. See Dussel, "The Political and Ecclesial Context," p. 177; and Richard, "Liberation Theology and Current Politics," p. 35.

[1]When World War II ended, many Christians deeply shared the hope of Western culture in the appearance of a different and better human being. A good detailed discussion of this period, 1930 to the 1960s--"the Golden age of the Latin American Church"--according to Richard (Liberation Theology and Current Politics, p. 35), can be found in Roberto Oliveros Maqueo, Liberación y teología: Génesis y crecimiento de una reflexión. 1966-1978 (México: CRT, 1977, pp. 36-54). See also the profusely documented essay of Roger Vekemans, "Antecedentes para el estudio de la teología de la liberación," Tierra Nueva 3 (October 1972):5-19. According to Dussel, the step toward *developmentalist theology* did not come until 1950, when many Christians adopted the bourgeois goals of expansion and development. The concept of *dependence* was not yet perceived as a reality in Latin America. See also Vicente Cosmao, "Towards a Theology of Development," IDOC 5 (June 13, 1970): 86-96.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Oliveros Maqueo correctly observes that the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965) marked the end of an era.[1] The changes that climaxed at Vatican II were largely due to the influence of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli elected to succeed Pope Pius XII in 1958.[2] His brief pontificate (1958-1963) produced two major social encyclicals.[3] John XXIII inaugurated, especially with the tone and style of *Mater et Magistra*, a new era in the Church's teaching.[4] Previous social encyclicals had been characterized to a certain degree by a teaching that came "from on high" to explain social realities below. But John XXIII "made a quiet transition from the abstract and

---

[1] Liberación y teología, p. 55. At the council attention was given to the cultural molds of different cultures to express the Gospel, and the doors were opened wide for the *aggiornamento* of the Church. Gutiérrez points out that "it was only with Vatican II that the Church began to abandon in any real sense the mentality of Christendom, a historical period which had already ended--four centuries before" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 59.

[2] Roncalli was elected Pope by the conclave of cardinals on October 28, 1958, and assumed the name of John XXIII.

[3] *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963). An official English translation of these encyclicals can be found in Joseph Gremillion, ed., The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), pp. 143-200, and 201-241, respectively.

[4] In the last twenty years there has been re-evaluation, on the part of the Church, of its mission in the world as well as of its understanding of the Christian message. For a brief study of this "re-evaluation" in Latin America, see Mark McGrath, "Church Doctrine in Latin America after the Council," in Landsberger, The Church and Social Change in Latin America, pp. 97-112.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

deductive method to an inductive method which begins with the realities, the aspirations of man for justice, and the facts and institutions which turn these aspirations into reality."[1]

One of the salient features[2] of *Mater et Magistra* is its global perspective, a call to aid economically the underdeveloped nations. It sees the relationship between economically advanced nations and those that are in process of development as "the most pressing question of our day."[3]

On April 11, 1963, less than two months before his death, John XXIII again reiterated his concerns in *Pacem in Terris* which contained some further developments in the area of social justice. Notable was the fact that, while not espousing communism or socialism, it did not condemn them. These ideologies might be philosophically wrong,

---

[1]Laurentin, Liberation, Development and Salvation, p. 104.

[2]An excellent analysis of this document and subsequent ones dealing with the same topic may be found in Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, pp. 1-138. See Robert McAfee Brown, Theology in a New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), pp. 27-35, for a Protestant perspective on these documents.

[3]John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, Art. 157. It adds that "justice and humanity require that these rich countries come to the aid of those in need" (Art. 161). "Likewise, necessity and justice require that wealth produced be distributed equitably among all the citizens of the Commonwealth" (Art. 168).

[4]Pope John XXIII died on June 3, 1963.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

but if they express concern for social justice, cooperation with them might be justified, since the Catholic Church is also concerned with social justice. It could happen, then, that "meetings for the attainment of some practical end, which formally were deemed inopportune and unproductive, might now or in the future be considered opportune and useful."[1]

John XXIII's increased interest in the Christian's responsibility in society climaxed in the Second Vatican Council,[2] which meant "a bold entry into the political and cultural arena unprecedented in the history of the Church's ecumenical councils."[3] What after Leo's *Rerum Novarum* became known as the "social teaching" of the Church had, by the time of Vatican II, become greatly expanded to include political, cultural, and economic teachings as well. *Gaudium et Spes*, one of sixteen documents promulgated by the Council, synthesizes the

---

[1]John XXIII, *Pacen in Terris*, Art. 160. Another significant feature of this encyclical was that, unlike earlier ones--including *Mater et Magistra*--it was not addressed exclusively to Roman Catholics, but to the "faithful of the whole world," an obvious invitation to non-Roman Catholics to join Catholics in working for social justice.

[2]The Second Vatican Council met from 1963 to 1965. John XXIII had been pope for only three months when, on January 25, 2959, he made the unexpected announcement of his plan to convoke the Church"s Twenty-First Ecumenical Council. Walter M. Abbot, The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).

[3]Alfred T. Hennely, Theologies in Conflict: The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), pp. 2, 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Church's attitude on human rights.[1]

One of the key emphases of this document is its anthropocentric orientation, both in the importance given to man[2] and in pointing to man's responsibility vis-à-vis the world.[3] Whereas God was to be heard

---

[1]See the pertinent article by Chris Gudorf, "Historical Change and Conceptions of Justice: Papal Social Teaching 1922-77," USQR 33 (1978):91-100. Pius XI, the first twentieth-century pope to address in any depth the social teaching of his predecessors, as well as Pius XII (his pontificate was from 1939-1958), reflect the belief that "the supernatural, the soul, and heaven are superior to the material, the body and this world" (p. 93). In keeping with this view, therefore, the Church was viewed as the depository of truth and did not need to take the world seriously. Significant were the words of Pope John XXIII in his opening address to the Council on October 11, 1962, in which he differentiated the deposit of truth from the manner in which those truths are formulated: "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another" (in Abbot, The Documents of Vatican II, p. 715).

[2]"All things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Art. 12). See Art. 12-22, on "The Dignity of the Human Person." Gremillion observes that "by this concentration on man in the world Vatican II inaugurated a new stage and quality of consciousness within the Church. In the ten years since, Catholic theology, liturgy, preaching and ministry have become much more man-centered" (The Gospel of Peace and Justice, p. 123).

[3]The Council fathers expressed the conviction that "we are witnessing the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by his responsibility toward his brothers and toward history" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Art. 55). Their emphasis on social justice is strong and clear, as when they say the "excessive economic and social differences between the members of the human family or population groups cause scandal and militate against social justice" (ibid., Art. 29). "Human institutions, both private and public . . . /must/ put up a stubborn fight against any kind of slavery, whether social or political" (Art. 29); they insist that "social necessities should be counted among the primary duties of modern man (Art. 30).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mainly in the voice of tradition and the magisterium of the Church, in *Gaudium et Spes* there is a willingness to hear the voice of God "in the signs of the times."[1]

The implications of this idea were spelled out more clearly by Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio*[2] with some bold underlinings in the area of social justice. It insists on the widening gap between the rich and the poor and affirms that "there are situations whose injustice cries to heaven."[3] It also calls for advanced countries to devote part of their productions to meet the needs of the underdeveloped ones.[4]

Clearly, the theological emphasis continued to

---

[1]Hugo Assmann, usually a severe critic of European theologies, comments on this encyclical: "The methodology of *Gaudium et Spes*, so different from that of the other conciliar documents, becomes paradigmatic for Latin American theology. It was a first sign that the secular sciences were being taken seriously as providing data for theological reflection" (Theology for a Nomad Church /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976/, p. 63). See also Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 168-172, for an evaluation of this encyclical.

[2]*Populorum Progressio* was released on March 26, 1967. An English translation of this encyclical can be found in Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, pp. 387-415.

[3]This encyclical was so innovative and challenging to the *status quo* that the Wall Street Journal described it as "warmed-over Marxism" (quoted in Brown, Theology in a New Key, p. 32).

[4]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, Art. 48. Part II of the encyclical, Art. 43-80, develops the theme of "The Development of the Human Race in the Spirit of Solidarity."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

be on "development" as the answer to the world's inequalities.[1]

Liberation Theology

Vatican II was a determining factor in the history of the Latin American Church, "it had the effect of a violent earthquake"[2] and "enabled the church to forge, for the first time, its own future."[3] The Latin American bishops met at Medellín in 1968 to discuss "The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council." This historic gathering can well be considered the starting point of Latin American liberation theology.[4]

---

[1]The term and idea of development had been used casually by Pope Pius XII in 1942; it was developed more fully in the early 1960s by Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*. It was considered with some detail in Vatican II, especially in *Gaudium et Spes*, and developed further by Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. The evolution of thought in these official statements is carefully traced and documented in Laurentin, Liberation, Development and Salvation, chap. 7. See also Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, chap. 2.

[2]José Comblin, "The Church in Latin America after Vatican II," LADOC 7 (Jan.-Feb. 1977):1. See also McGrath, "Church Doctrine in Latin America after the Council," pp. 97-112, for a discussion of the impact of Vatican II on Latin American theological thought.

[3]Conway, "Latin American Pattern," p. 20. See also Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 101-131, Vekemans, Teología de la liberación, pp. 83-123, and Emilio Núñez, "The Theology of Liberation in Latin America," BSac 134 (1977):343-356.

[4]Actually, 1968 is more a symbolic date than a chronological one. As is seen later, the sounds of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

There was, to be sure, a long process, a series of events that culminated at Medellín. Looking retrospectively at the event, they can be discerned easily.[1] By the mid 1960s, parallel with the disappointments of the developmentalist efforts in the economic realm, a shift began to be observed toward liberation[2] in theological thinking. Undoubtedly, Pope John XXIII stands out as the single most influential figure of this new theological development.[3]

---

liberation theology were in the air prior to that date. It remains true, however, that Medellín gave to this the stamp of approval and with it a momentum that it hardly could have achieved without this historical gathering. For a good summary of the development of liberation theology, see Hugo Assmann, Opresión-Liberación: Desafío a los cristianos (Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1971), pp. 45-50, and Oliveros Maqueo, Liberación y teología, *passim*.

[1]Dussel sees the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1958 as the first significant event in the process. See "Sobre la historia de la teología," p. 54. Martyrs Camilo Torres and "Ché" Guevara became the heroes of the left-oriented sectors in Latin America: "They have irrevocably marked the process which Latin America is living through" (Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The Praxis of Liberation and the Christian Faith," LumVit 29 /1974/:337).

[2]A basic distinction between these two concepts is that whereas development calls for a gradual change without the disruption of present institutions, liberation calls for radical change, a complete change in structures as the only viable alternative to solve the problem the continent is facing. Mention has already been made of Laurentin's excellent book, Liberation, Development and Salvation. Although it was first published in 1968 and, therefore, written largely from a developmentalist perspective, in an extensive preface to the English edition Laurentin gives the rationale for the shift from development to liberation.

[3]C. Peter Wagner is not exaggerating, I believe, when he evaluates the impact of John XXIII on Latin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In 1965, Vatican II, the beginning and end of many things, came to a close; soon after the council, the word "post conciliar" began to be heard implying the currents of renewal the council had brought about, making possible the development of "a theology that gleaned from the council not so much its claims to legitimacy but rather its right to divest itself of the dead weight of the whole prior dogmatics."[1]

Even prior to the end of the council the stress on existential theology that had dominated the theological scene in the previous decade began to fade, giving way to a new theological emphasis with a theory that faith was to be viewed as public, political praxis designed to transform the world.[2]

America saying that "when Western historians evaluate this period a century from now, it may well turn out that Pope John XXIII will have been judged to have had more influence on the Latin American continent than any other man in the twentieth century. Roman Catholics will never be the same as the result of the council he called and the attitude he infused. Inescapably, Protestantism has also received indelible marks from the turn of events" (Latin American Theology: Radical or Evangelical /Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1970/, p. 17.

[1]Alfredo Fierro, The Militant Gospel. A Critical Introduction to Political Theologies (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1977), p. 12. See Schoof, A Survey of Catholic Theology, esp. pp. 228-275, where he discusses the council and takes a look beyond it. For a Protestant analysis of the council, see the excellent work of G. C. Berkouwer, The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism (Grand Rapids: W. B. Erdmans Pub. Co., 1965).

[2]Ibid, p. 13. Fierro's book is comprehensive in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The typical characterization of religion as a private affair which had dominated the scene for centuries[1] was almost suddenly challenged by a stress on the public character of the gospel message. Theologians began to underline the critical and revolutionary character of faith. The emphasis shifted, and rather speedily, from the "vertical" to the "horizontal" dimensions of Christian concerns.[2]

This new trend in theological thinking took a rapid turn with the publication of Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of Hope in 1964.[3] With Moltmann the theological

---

scope, covering European political theologies as well as the theologies of revolution and Latin American liberation theology. He writes within the Christian and Marxist traditions, insisting that "Marxism does present itself as the most coherent and totalizing theory. . . . Political theology is the specific and proper form of theology in an epoch dominated by Marx" (p. 102).

[1]See ibid., p. 24. Fierro also discusses Bultmann's existential interpretation of the NT and its influence on the private, subjectivistic view of religion, as well as the I-Thou philosophy elaborated by Martin Buber, which provided categories that were suitable for understanding God as the absolute, pure Thou (pp. 7-12). According to Fierro, the furthest limits of this reduction of religiosity to the subjective realm can be expressed in Whitehead's words: Religion is "what man does with his solitude" (p. 24).

[2]For a discussion of this shift in theological thinking oriented towards radical social change, see Langdon Gilkey, Reaping the Whirlwind. A Christian Interpretation of History (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 226-238.

[3]The German edition, Theologie der Hoffnung, appeared in 1964. In English it appeared as Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology (New York: Harper & Row, Pub., 1967). This

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pendulum shifted strongly from faith to hope, that is, attention moved from past to future.[1] Moltmann's theology of hope has exerted an undeniable influence on the emergence of liberation theologies, since he himself has opted for a theological position more radical and critical than most European theologians.[2]

---

book, translated into Spanish in 1967, has had a determining effect on Latin American Roman Catholic theology. By the mid 1960s, thanks to Pope John XXIII's definite ecumenical concerns and the accomplishments of Vatican II, the spirit of polemics and distrust that had existed between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Latin America since the first Protestants arrived on the continent by the middle of the nineteenth century, began to give way to an attitude of cooperation and openness. Gutiérrez cites more than twenty Protestant theologians in his A Theology of Liberation. Among them are Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John C. Bennett, Rudolf Bultmann, Harvey Cox, Oscar Cullmann, Jurgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Gerhard Von Rad, Richard Shaull, Orlando FalsBorda, Julio de Santa Ana, Rubem Alves, Julius Wellhausen, Joachim Heremias, and C. H. Dodd.

[1]Robert McAfee Brown, Is Faith Obsolete? (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 14. The influence of the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch on Moltmann's thought is very evident. Moltmann himself wrote in 1970 that "Bloch's philosophy provides us with a first set of concepts with which to articulate theoretically and practically the insight that, and in what sense, Christianity is eschatology through and through--namely, a world-transforming and world overcoming hope" ("Politics and the Practice of Hope," ChrCent 10 /1970/:289). For a concise analysis of Moltmann's thought see Kenneth Heinitz, "The Eschatological and the Political in Moltmann's Theology," CTM 43 /1972/:368-375).

[2]Rubem Alves, a leading Brazilian theologian wrote his doctoral dissertation at Princeton in 1969. Its very title--Theology of Human Hope--betrays Moltmann's influence. Hugo Assmann points out that Moltmann's work deserves "un amplio balance positivo ya que se trata de una de las mejores cosas de la teología actual" (Opresión-Liberación, p. 119).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gustavo Gutiérrez, in spite of being "far from the position of Jürgen Moltmann in some points," can say that Moltmann's work is undoubtedly one of the most important in contemporary theology.[1] Theology of hope, after a promising start, survived the sixties, to merge with more political theologies afterwards.[2] The best known proponent of "political theology"[3] is doubtless

---

[1]A Theology of Liberation, p. 218. Gutiérrez finds some limitations in Moltmann's theology, especially in that he gives the impression that he does not keep sufficiently in mind the participation of man in his own liberation (p. 182). He acknowledges, however, that in more recent writings Moltmann shows "an interesting evolution and a fruitful opening to the historical struggle of man today" (p. 241). See Assmann, Opresión-Liberación, pp. 119-121, for a similar criticism of Moltmann's theology.

[2]After the appearance of Theology of Hope, Moltmann wrote copiously, both books and articles. In his later works, especially in Religion, Revolution and the Future and The Crucified God, a shift in his emphasis --from the future to the present--can be clearly discerned. Already in 1970 he reflected that "having read the book /Theology of Hope/ many believed that they now knew what they wanted, but they did not clearly see what step they should take. Maybe I did not know myself very clearly and was waiting for others to show me. . . . Meanwhile I believe I have come to see somewhat more clearly. I owe this to my Catholic friend Johannes Baptist Metz, who made his way from eschatological to political theology. . . . So I am concerned with the development of a political theology" ("Politics and the Practice of Hope," ChrCent 87 /1970/:290, 291).

[3]"Political" does not necessarily imply involvement in partisan politics. It suggests a contrast with private and individual; it has the dimensions of social or public. It indicates a shift from a theology primarily interested in orthodoxy to a theology primarily concerned with orthopraxis. Metz acknowledges though, that "political theology" is an ambiguous expression. See his Theology of the World (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), p. 107. Moltmann defines political theology as the attempt to proclaim the "message of Christ within the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Johannes Baptist Metz.[1] Metz is strong in his criticism of existential theology for taking its categories from the realm of private, apolitical life, insisting that "the deprivatizing of theology is the primary critical task of political theology."[2] Besides, in the 1960s, motivated by some provocative statements of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his Letter and Papers from Prison,[3] some

---

conditions of contemporary society in order to free man practically from the coercions of this society and to prepare the way for the eschatological freedom of the new man" (TToday 28 /1972/:8). See Gerald A. Butler "Political Theology: An Appraisal," RelLife 42 (1973): 206-211. See also Dorothee Sölle, Political Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), especially chap. 1, "From Existentialist to Political Theology," pp. 1-9. The shift involves, says Sölle, a move from a theology whose key words are "faith and understanding" to one which focuses on "faith and action" (p. 3).

[1]The main exposition of Metz's thought is found in his book Theology of the World. For a more concise exposition, see "Political Theology," SM 5 (1970):247-252. Gutiérrez finds Metz's theology "a fertile effort to think the faith through" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 225), in spite of its shortcomings, mainly certain inadequacies in his analysis of the contemporary political situation, which could be overcome with "the contribution of the social sciences" (p. 224).

[2]Metz, Theology of the World, p. 110. Metz is very critical of the existential interpretation of the NT, championed by Bultmann, which leads to a definite individualism. See especially pp. 107-136.

[3]New York: MacMillan Co., 1953. "I have been saying that God is being increasingly pushed out of a world that has come to age, out of the spheres of our knowledge and life, and that since Kant he has been relegated to a realm beyond the world of experience" (p. 88). See Julio de Santa Ana, "The Influence of Bonhoeffer on the Theology of Liberation," EcuR 28 (1976):188-197. Santa Ana, although recognizing that theology of liberation "is highly dependent on the thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer" (p. 88), believes that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

theologians set out to write about the death of God as a cultural fact.[1] Strangely enough, during a brief period of time in the 1960s, theology began to be written without the hypothesis of God. This new trend was so bizarre that "it soon degenerated into a faddist and paperback theology."[2]

With the publication of Harvey Cox's The Secular City,[3] the same decade saw the spectacular rise, in the United States, of "secular theology." The cultural mood of many people in the United States during the late 1950s and early 1960s was predominantly secular. Belief in a transcendent being who helps man solve his problems was increasingly seen as irrelevant for man "come of age."[4]

---

his influence is noted mainly in the work of Protestant theologies. It should be noted, however, that Roman Catholic theologians also draw liberally from Bonhoeffer's thought, especially his emphasis on the ethical and anthropocentric beginning of theology, and on the idea that the Church should espouse a sociopolitical ideology that sides with the oppressed. See Alan Neeley, "Liberation Theology in Latin America: Antecedents and Autochthony," Miss 7 (1978):361.

[1]The main exponents of the "Death of God" theology were Thomas J. Altizer, The Gospel of Christian Atheism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), and Kenneth Hamilton, God Is Dead: The Anatomy of a Slogan (Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966).

[2]Harold B. Kuhn, "Editorial," AsbSem 34 (1979):3.

[3]New York: McMillan Pub. Co., 1965.

[4]Cox defines secularization as "the liberation of man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Very significant also, in influencing the new trend in theology towards more this-worldly concerns, was the international conference on Church and Society that the World Council of Churches held in Geneva in July 1966. The theme of the conference was "Christians in the Technical and Social Revolution of Our Time." With even more vigor than Vatican II, the conference defined the new realms of theological reflection in terms of its relationship to society. Richard Shaull[1] spoke at that time about a theology of revolution.[2]

---

toward this one" (ibid. p. 15). Whereas tribal man had spoken of God in mythological terms and village man in metaphysical terms, the man of the secular city can only speak of God in political language. See also Fierro, The Militant Gospel, pp. 13, 14. Gutiérrez mentions Cox only three times in A Theology of Liberation, but sees secularization as a process that coincides perfectly with the Christian view of man, for it favors a more complete fulfillment of the Christian life "insofar as it offers man the possibility of being more fully human" (p. 67).

[1]Richard Shaull worked for over twenty years in Latin America and was especially influential through ISAL, Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina. This organization of Protestant origin seeks to promote the social work of the Church. It affirms that theology cannot be made apart from political involvement and is very sympathetic to Marxism. See Núñez, "Theology of Liberation in Latin America," pp. 344-348. For a detailed discussion on ISAL, especially its waning strength after the fall of the Allende government in Chile, see Orlando E. Costas, Theology of the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1976), pp. 199-223.

[2]Richard Shaull, "Revolutionary Change in Theological Perspective," in Harvey G. Cox, ed., The Church Amid Revolution: A Selection of the Essays Prepared for the World Council of Churches. Geneva Conference on Church and Society (New York: Association Press, 1967), pp. 27-47. Also his Encounter with Revolution (New York:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fierro points out that only the Latin American bishops' gathering at Medellín in 1968, "which served as the springboard for the Latin American theology of liberation," can compare, in the Catholic Church, with the theologico-political import of the Geneva gathering.[1]

A similar turn toward politics became

Association Press, 1955). J. Andrews Kirk suggests that the Publication of this book marks the origin of revolutionary theology. Theology Encounters Revolution (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1980), p. 43. See also on this topic Osmundo A. Miranda, "Aspects of Latin American Revolutionary Theologies," JInThC 5 (1977):1-22. According to Miranda's evaluation, in spite of having spent over twenty years in Latin America, Shaull was always a foreigner who "never experienced the anxieties of the ordinary man, he went to Latin America to teach, never to learn" (p. 5).

[1]Fierro, The Militant Gospel, 13. The World Council of Churches has continued to encourage churches and individuals to identify themselves with concerns for social issues. The two meetings, following Geneva, that have proved of greater influence in the area of social concerns were The Fourth General Assembly of the W.C.C. held in Uppsala in 1968, and the Bangkok Conference, convened in 1973 by the Commission of World Mission and Evangelization, a department of the W.C.C. A detailed study of these trends in the W.C.C. can be found in Paul Bock, In Search of a Responsible Society (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974). For an excellent discussion of the same issues, especially as they relate to liberation theology, see Neely, Protestant Antecedents, pp. 57-141. Ernst W. Lefever points out that the W.C.C. "has moved from a largely Western concept of political responsibility to a more radical ideology that by 1975 embraced the concept and practice of "liberation theology" (CT 23 /1979/:161). For evangelical reactions towards the horizontal tendencies of the W.C.C., see Ralph D. Winter, ed., The Evangelical Response to Bangkok (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973). For a more concise evaluation see Gunar Ansons, "Ecumenism under Tension: Evangelicals versus Socio-Political Forces" (LW 22 /1975/:199-212, and Stephen Neill, "Salvation Today" (Chmn 87 /1973/:263-274).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

increasingly apparent in Latin American theological endeavors.[1] Motivated by the situation of poverty and dependence of the continent and inspired by the fresh air that was blowing through the opened windows of Vatican II, a new kind of theological reflection was fostered among Roman Catholics, focusing on the need of liberation[2] and, at the same time to a large extent, detached from earlier dogmatics.[3] These trends

---

[1]This new theological emphasis is closely related to the development of sociological thought in Latin America. When the sociologists assumed the reality of "dependence" and "liberation" as a structure of analysis and urged the need of revolutionary liberation as the solution, theologians discovered a new direction for their own reflections. As Míguez Bonino puts it, "The new sociological categories provided the scientific structure necessary to grasp, analyze, and carry forward a phenomenon for which the theologian had no categories: the revolutionary praxis of a growing number of Christians" (Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation, p. 69). See also chap. 2, "The Awakening of the Christian Conscience," pp. 38-60, and Fierro, The Militant Gospel, pp. 15, 16.

[2]In 1966 Richard Shaull was already underlining the need for liberation: "This liberation is in terms of openness to an existential situation, to our Latin American reality with all its features, its needs, its institutions. . . ." (quoted in Neely, "Liberation Theology in Latin America" (p. 363). Shaull is considered by some as a forerunner of liberation theology. See Wagner, Latin American Theology, pp. 53-62, for a discussion of Shaull's influence on the theological "left" in Latin America. Emilio Castro can also be considered as one of the first prophetic voices "calling for a relevant theology for Latin America" in the early 1960s, although he himself never fully developed it. See Beatriz Melano Couch, "New Visions of the Church in Latin America: A Protestant View," in Torres, The Emergent Gospel, p. 202.

[3]For a discussion of the originality of liberation theology, see Neely, "Liberation Theology in Latin America," pp. 365-367. Dussel sees liberation theology

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

converged at Medellín, where they gathered strength and momentum.[1]

The immediate antecedent of this historical episcopal gathering was Pope Paul's visit to Bogotá, Colombia, just prior to the opening of the Council.[2] In Latin America he was known as the author of the widely read *Populorum Progressio* published the previous year. *Populorum Progressio*, in its unambiguous call for social change, rejected violent revolution but made one

---

as "the child of European theology," -- although it is different, elaborated in a completely different setting ("The Political and Ecclesial Context," p. 175). Moltmann sees little originality in liberation theology to the point, a bit extreme, of describing Gutiérrez' book as "an invaluable contribution to European theology. But where is Latin America in it all?" (Jürgen Moltmann, "An Open Letter to José Míguez Bonino," (ChrCris 36 /1976/:59). The reason for this strong European flavor, argues Mutcher, is due to the fact that European priests, mainly French and Dutch, working for CELAM, wrote the working documents for the Medellín Conference (David E. Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America. /New York: Praeger Pub., 1971/, p. 101). It remains true, however, that at Medellín the Latin American Church began to consciously express its own identity.

[1]The official English edition of the documents produced by the Medellín Conference can be found in Louis M. Colonnese, ed., The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council, Vol. I, Position Papers; Vol. II, Conclusions (Washington, D. C.: Latin American Division of the United States Catholic Conference, 1973).

[2]Late in August of 1968, Pope Paul VI became the first pope to visit Latin America. His visit contemplated a dual purpose: to address the 39th International Eucharistic Congress in Bogotá, Colombia, and to open the Second General Assembly of the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM II). A report of the Pope's visit to Colombia, including the different addresses he delivered while he was there can be found in The Pope Speaks, vol. 13, 1968.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

important qualification. Said the Pope,

> We know, however, that a revolutionary uprising --save where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country--produces new injustices . . . and brings on new disasters. 1

Since these words were quickly followed by a call for "bold transformation, innovations that go deep, urgent reforms should be undertaken without delay,"[2] the Pope's position was generally interpreted in Latin America as condemnation of the oppression of the established order, from which liberation was urgently needed.

The Pope's three-day visit to Colombia gathered impressive crowds, but his speeches were seen as a conscious retreat from some of the affirmation of *Populorum Progressio*. The emphasis again fell on moderation and reform--not revolution.[3] In an address to workers and youth, on August 23, he seemed to have closed the loophole he had left open for the possibility of violence as a last-resort measure:

> We must say and reaffirm that violence is not in accord with the Gospel, that it is not Christian;

---

[1] *Populorum Progressio*, Art. 31.

[2] Ibid., Art. 32.

[3] Before a crowd of 300,000 *campesinos* and students, he stated: "The keystone to the fundamental problem of Latin America consists in the double endeavors--simultaneous, harmonious and mutually advantageous--of proceeding not simply to a reform of social structures, but to a gradual reform that all can assimilate" ("Changing Social Structures: A Time of Crisis," p. 241).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> and that sudden violent changes of structures would be deceitful, would be ineffective of themselves, and certainly would not be in conformity with the dignity of the people. Their dignity demands that the needed changes be realized from within. 1

In his evaluation of the Pope's visit to Colombia, Abalos observed that the pleas for patience and charity on the part of the Pope seemed in practice to mean simply that the poor should accept their lot with dignity until such time as God moved the heart of the rich to loosen their hold on society.[2]

Many observers predicted that the emphasis of Pope Paul's statements at Bogotá would turn the forthcoming bishops' conference to the right, that the conservatives' hands had been strengthened. After the Pope's departure, the bishops of Latin America assembled in Medellín for their second continental gethering.[3] The character of the conference cannot easily be evaluated in terms of "left" or "right," although the texts of the reports are more in line with the spirit of

---

[1] Ibid., p. 240.

[2] David Abalos, "The Medellín Conference," Cross-Cur 19 (1969):113. The Pope made a strong plea for the men of management, the elite, "to help those who have less, the lowly, the needy, to see in the exercise of authority the concern, discretion and wisdom which make it respected by all and to the advantage of all" ("Changing Social Structures," p. 242).

[3] The delegation of 130 bishops was a divided group. Some thought in terms of peaceful, progressive development according to Western models of democracy. Others advocated total liberation from all internal and external structures of dependence.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Populorum Progressio--from which they draw heavily--than with the "softenings" intended by the Pope a few days earlier.[1]

The Medellín documents, even when not clearly consistent, strongly support the liberation perspective in theology and social action of the Church. Medellín became a point of reevaluation of the social teaching of the Church.[2] It might well be considered as "the Vatican II of Latin America."[3]

---

[1]Renato Poblete, one of the experts called upon for the Medellín Conference, points out that the major goal of the Medellín documents is "to change the situation of dependence and to get rid of all political power that is considered oppressive" ("From Medellín to Puebla," Worldview 21 /Oct. 1978/:28). According to Dussel, the thought of the conference stands somewhere in the transitional phase between developmentalism and the theology of liberation. History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 115. Núñez is probably closer to the truth when he sees Medellín as "a turn toward the left in regard to the problems of underdevelopment in Latin America" ("Theology of Liberation in Latin America," p. 350). For a detailed analysis of the Medellín documents see Oliveros Maqueo, Liberación y Teología, pp. 111-129, and Abalos, "The Medellín Conference," pp. 113-132. He adds that the principles emphasized in the Medellín documents include *conscientization*, that is, the awakening of the masses to a true consciousness of their situation in order that they may become agents of their own *liberation* through *participation* in the common effort to create a new society" (ibid.).

[2]Poblete, "From Medellín to Puebla," p. 27.

[3]Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 113. The Medellín documents are copiously footnoted with conciliar texts and papal encyclicals, yet in many instances they go beyond Vatican II. The expression, for instance, of "institutionalized violence," referring to the situation of Latin America caused by "oppressive structures," is used in these documents for the first

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The bishops spoke with uninhibited enthusiasm and clearness about their hopes for the future of Latin America.[1] Even though they did not completely set aside the "developmentalistic" mentality, characteristic of the decade, it is obvious that they were anxiously groping for new ways of approaching the chronic ills of their continent. They stated that

> Latin America is obviously under the sign of transformation and development; a transformation that, besides taking place with extraordinary speed has come to touch and influence every level of human activity, from the economic to the religious. This indicates that we are on the threshold of a new epoch in the history of our continent. It appears to be a time full of zeal for full emancipation, of liberation from every form of servitude, of personal maturity and of collective integration. In these signs we perceive the first indications of the painful birth of a new civilization. 2

---

time in an official documents of the Catholic Church. See Medellín, Conclusions, "Peace," art. 16. This analysis could be initiated invoking hierarchical support.

[1]Dom Helder Camara, a long time apostle of peace and justice in Brazil, reflected on Medellín ten years later: "The Spirit of God was with us, pushing us to discover, in our continent, the most painful of colonialisms: privileged internal groups who maintain their personal wealth at the expense of the misery of their countrymen. The greatness of Medellín is that it was not a matter of theorists whose only purpose was to diagnose our ills; we were pastors who went on to recognize that it was not time for a great many words, but rather, for more action" ("CELAM: History is implacable," CrossCur 28 /Spring 1978/:55).

[2]Medellín, Conclusions, "Introduction to the Final Document," art. 4. The political context of the time explains why the bishops saw no need of being too cautious in moving to the "left." Che Guevara had been killed in Bolivia the previous year, and the rural guerrilla movements had subsided. At the moment, there was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Post Medellín[1]

Even though the word liberation and the theme of liberation are present in the Medellín documents, liberation as a theological concept evolved slowly, coming into full prominence in the Christian vocabulary after the Medellín Conference.[2] Assmann has noted that after the frustration of the first decade of development, 1970 was the first year in which conferences and symposia on the theology of liberation "became commonplace throughout Latin America."[3]

---

not immediate "danger" of a triumph of the left. On the other hand, the failure of the U. S. "development" program, embodied in the Alliance for Progress, was all too evident.

[1]In this section we will proceed rather summarily, since its purpose is only to call attention to some of the main events that had a bearing on the shaping of liberation theology in the decade following Medellín, rather than an evaluation of them.

[2]Phillip Berryman points out some of the limitations of Medellín which had to be overcome after the conference: "Although it /Medellín/ adopts the dependence framework of interpretation, it is rather more descriptive than analytical and does not arrive at the mechanisms of oppression for which it lacks adequate instruments of analysis. It is notably silent on how its ambitious aims are to be realized in society at large and in the Church itself. Its theology will need to be developed" ("Latin American Liberation Theology," in Torres, Theology of the Americas, p. 26). Dussel sets the period of 1968-1972 as the years of the "formulation of Liberation Theology" (Maldonado, Liberación y Cuativerio, p. 54).

[3]Hugo Assmann, Theology for a Nomad Church (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), p. 52. Assmann lists six such conferences, which include only international gatherings. Many others were held at the national and regional levels. For a concise analysis of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In 1971, Gustavo Gutiérrez' A Theology of Liberation[1] appeared, which soon became a milestone that marked the "before" and "after" in Latin American theology.[2]

The first clear sign of radicalization of the theme of liberation came in April of 1972, from the First Encounter of Christians for Socialism held in Santiago, Chile,[3] under the leadership of Gonzalo Arroyo. Chile presented at that time an ideal climate[4] for the gathering of the 450 delegates which came from

---

post-Medellín developments, see Poblete, "From Medellín to Puebla," pp. 27-30; Schillebeeckx, "Liberation Theology between Medellín and Puebla," pp. 3-7, and Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," pp. 3-27. For a more extended study, see Oliveros Maqueo, Liberación y teología, pp. 177-205.

[1]The first edition of Gutiérrez' book, Teología de la liberación--Perspectivas, was published in 1971.

[2]To refer to this book as a milestone in the theological development of Latin America does not mean that the work was in any sense final. Gutiérrez himself, towards the end of his book, speaks of the necessity of advancing "by trial and error. . . . Some chapters of theology can be written only afterwards" (p. 272). It is also true, however, that after 1971 all liberation theology in Latin America is written with Gutiérrez' book as the main reference point.

[3]An English edition of the documents produced by this encounter can be found in John Eagleson, ed., Christians and Socialism (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1975). For an excellent analysis of these documents, see Phillip Berryman, "Christians for Socialism," JES 9 (1972):948-950. See also Brown, Theology in a New Key, pp. 52-59.

[4]In 1970 Salvador Allende--an avowed Marxist--became the first Marxist to be elected president through democratic process. His government was toppled in a military coup in 1973.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

different countries of Latin America and beyond.[1] The organizers of this conference "were clearly committed to a purpose--the transformation of Latin American society through revolutionary change, in the direction of a socialist society."[2] Consequently, theology was not a primary concern of the participants. At Santiago, there seemed to be little interest in an *a priori* theology; it was rather felt that the theology would be worked out later, in the midst of the struggle for liberation.[3]

Another important means for the popularization of liberation theology was the influential journal Concilium which in 1974 devoted an entire issue to the

---

[1]Of the 450 delegates, approximately 300 were from Chile, fifty from Argentina, eleven from Cuba. Due to political conditions some Latin American countries like Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay could not send delegates. There were also representatives from the United States, Canada, and Europe. Only one bishop, Sergio Méndez Arceo of Cuernavaca, México, participated.

[2]Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. xiii. In a letter to Gonzalo Arroyo, Raúl Cardenal Silva, archbishop of Santiago, declined the invitation to patronize the meeting stating: "I have carefully studied the Draft Agenda of the proposed convention. . . . From my study of this document I am convinced that you are going to hold a political meeting and that your aim is to commit the Church and the Christians to the struggle on behalf of Marxism and the Marxist revolution in Latin America" (Eagleson, Christians and Socialism, p. 41).

[3]Berryman, "Christians for Socialism," p. 950. "If the distance between Vatican II and Medellín constitutes a step, the distance between the Medellín conference of the bishops and the Santiago conference of Christians for Socialism resembles a leap," observes Brown (Theology in a New Key, p. 55). The idea of a "third way" between Capitalism and Marxism was abandoned, and liberation in Socialism terms was advocated.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

theme of liberation and was made available to a world-wide audience through publication in many languages.[1]

In August of 1975, an international meeting of theologians was held in Mexico City in preparation for the forthcoming hemispheric gathering of CELAM. The papers presented dealt mainly with methodology.[2] It was clearly recognized on that occasion that the historical context in Latin America had changed considerably since Medellín. An "ideological hardening" was perceived in the majority of Latin American countries.[3] With the establishment of military regimes in several countries, the tasks of the theology of liberation had been profoundly affected. The optimism of an imminent Exodus was being replaced by thoughts of "exile" and "captivity."[4]

---

[1]Vol. 6, No. 10, 1974. It contained articles by Segundo Galilea, Enrique Dussel, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff, José Comblin, Juan Luis Segundo, Raúl Vidales, Ronaldo Muñoz, and José Míguez Bonino.

[2]The reports, comprising over 600 pages, were published in book form by Enrique Ruiz Maldonado, under the title Liberación y cautiverio. Debates en torno al método de la teología de América Latina (México: Comité Organizador, 1975). The names of Dussel, Segundo, Assman, Sobrino, Boff, Comblin, Ellacurría, among others --a total of twenty-six--appear as contributors to this theological consultation.

[3]Juan Luis Segundo, "Condiciones actuales de la reflexión teológica en Latinoamérica," in Ruiz Maldonado, Liberación y cautiverio, pp. 92-93.

[4]Dussel states that since 1972, "la teología de la liberación, que se había inspirado predominantemente en las gestas positivas de liberación (y por ellos en Moisés saliendo de Egipto), descubre ante la dura realidad de la praxis al tema del 'cautiverio' y el 'exilio'"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

From Mexico City several of the participants headed North to Detroit for a week-long conference called "Theology in the Americas: 1975."[1] The main objective of the conference was to explore the possibilities of utilizing the Latin American theology of liberation for a clearer understanding of the "North American reality."[2]

A year later, in August of 1976, another theological conference convened at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.[3]

("Sobre la historia de la teología en América Latina," p. 58). And Segundo notes that it is becoming more common in some Latin American countries to turn to the less historical portions of the OT, such as the wisdom literature, the literature in which Israel did not have historical perspective, but rather attempted to establish a more individual, internal religiosity through the Psalms, etc. ("Condiciones actuales," p. 99).

[1]The conference was sponsored by the Latin American bureaus of the U. S. Catholic Conference and the National Council of Churches. Among the 200 participants there were some prominent North American theologians like Gregory Baum, James Cone, Robert McAfee Brown, Rosemary Ruether, and Frederick Herzog; over one-third of the delegates were women; there were also twenty-five Latins in attendance, among them Gustavo Gutiérrez (who arrived late due to political developments in Perú), Juan Luis Segundo, Hugo Assmann, José Porfirio Miranda, Enrique Dussel, Leonardo Boff, and José Míguez Bonino. Even though the delegates were primarily from North and South America, all continents were represented. See Alfred T. Hennelly, "Who Does Theology in the Americas?" America 33 (1975):137,139, and Harrison, "Challenging the Western Paradigm," pp. 151-154 for a pertinent analysis of the conference.

[2]The essays presented at Detroit have been published by Sergio Torres, ed., Theology in the Americas (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976).

[3]Twenty-two theologians from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and one representative from Black North America met to reflect upon the significance of theology in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The central objectives of this gathering were "to scrutinize the 'signs of the times,' to listen to the Spirit amid the divisions between the rich and the poor, and to examine the two distinct perspectives operative in theology today."[1]

A decade after Medellín, the bishops of Latin America, amidst great expectations, met in Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico, from January 17 to February 12 of 1979,[2] to consider "The Present and Future Evangelization in Latin America." The years following Medellín saw a growing chasm between conservatives and progressives within the Roman Catholic Church.[3]

---

countries of the Third World. The essays presented at this conference have been published by Sergio Torres, in The Emergent Gospel.

[1]Torres, The Emergent Gospel, pp. vii, viii. One of these "perspectives" is the theologies from Europe and North America, which represent a form of "cultural domination," the other is the one done by Third World Christians, who have begun to look at history from their perspective as citizens of poor and dominated countries. Analyzing the accomplishments of Dar el Salaam, Oliveros Maqueo observes that "si bien no aporta mayores novedades, es importante por la unión en la tarea de liberación de las comunidades del tercer mundo" (Liberación y Teología, p. 388).

[2]The Conference was originally scheduled to meet from October 12-28, 1978, but was postponed due to the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, on September 29 of that year, after a pontificate of only thirty-four days. When the conference finally convened, there were present twenty-one cardinals, sixty-six archbishops, and 131 bishops, out of 356 participants. See Pablo Ramos, "New Light on the Pope in Mexico," The Month 12 (1979):118-122.

[3]See James Brockman, "Preparation for Puebla," America 40 (1979):49-50. Brockman states that "it has

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The organization of the conference awakened avid polemics and debate.[1] There was an obvious intent of weakening theology in the continent.[2] In his opening address the Pope reminded the bishops that the mission of the Church is evangelization, not politics. He called on the bishops to make the Medellín documents their points of orientation but quickly pointed out that there had been since Medellín some "re-readings" of the Gospel that were the product of "theoretical speculation rather than authentic meditation on the Word of God and

---

been no secret that since 1972, when Bishop Alfonso López Trujillo became secretary of CELAM, a more conservative atmosphere prevailed" (p. 49).

[1] CrossCur devoted an entire issue--Vol 18, Spring 1978--to discuss the preparations for Puebla and their implications. See especially in this issue, "The Manipulation of CELAM" (by the Costa Rican Ecumenical Council), pp. 60-70. Also LumVit 33:3 (1978), under the title "Approaching the Puebla Conference," For a concise summary of what went on "behind the scenes," see Gerald McCarthy, "The Politics of 'Puebla 1979'" The Month 12 (1979):39-40, 63.

[2] See Joseph Comblin, "The Bishops' Conference at Puebla," TDig 28 (1980):9-12. He states that "there were hopes--and fears--that Puebla would administer the *coup de grace* to liberation theology" (p. 11). He concludes that no clear decision was made in regards to liberation theology at Puebla, due to the fact that the bishops split into three groups: a number of defenders against an equal number of opponents, with the majority in the center calling for frank dialog with liberation theologians. A month after Puebla, Bishop López Trujillo was elected president of CELAM to replace progressive Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider, who did not seek re-election for health reasons. Progressives saw that election of López Trujillo as "a backlash against the achievements of progressives in Puebla" (Moisés Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," in Eagleson, Puebla and Beyond, p. 42).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a genuine evangelical commitment."[1] In relation to the hidden danger of this "re-reading" of the Gospel, he spoke the now much-quoted words:

> In other cases people purport to depict Jesus as a political activist, as a fighter against Roman domination and authorities, and even as someone involved in the class struggle. This conception of Jesus as a political figure, as a revolutionary, as a subversive from Nazareth, does not tally with the Church's catechesis. 2

Many commentators understood the Pope's words as an implicit rejection of liberation theology. Time, for example, published an evaluation of Pope John Paul II's visit to Mexico under the title: "John Paul vs. Liberation Theology."[3] As it often happens under the pressure of instant editorial analysis, some of these evaluations were too simplified and distorted. Clearly, the Pope condemned armed violence in the name of the Gospel,

---

[1]Pope John Paul II, "Opening Address to the Puebla Conference," I, 4. (The entire text of the Pope's address, as well as the official translation of the final documents with commentaries can be found in John Eagleson, Puebla and Beyond). The text of the Puebla Conference comprises twenty-one documents redacted by twenty-one committees. This coupled with the divergent views of the participants accounts for the repetitions and apparent contradictions in the documents. With a touch of humor, James Brockman observes that "if the camel is an animal designed by a committee, the Puebla document is a herd of twenty-five camels jostling and kicking one another" ("Seventeen Days in Puebla," America 140 /1979/: 183).

[2]Ibid.

[3]February 12, 1979, pp. 68, 69. See Dawn Gibeau and Penny Lernoux, "U. S. Press Errs in Summarizing Pope at Puebla," NCR (Feb 16, 1979):10, 39.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

warned against partisan political activism by priests, and rejected the overdrawn analysis of class conflict that distorts the universal message of the Gospel.[1] He also called attention to the danger of reductionism in Latin American theology, where the Kingdom of God is often understood in a secularist sense, proclaiming its arrival "merely by structural change and sociopolitical involvement."[2] Christ's mission "has to do with a complete and integral salvation through love that brings transformation, peace, pardon, and reconciliation."[3] The Pope did not question, however, all that liberation theology stands for.[4] With skill and balance, he tried to place the entire issue into perspective. While the mission of the Church to preach the Gospel demands that it do all in its power to end injustice and make the structures more human, yet in its struggle for human rights, Latin America must not ignore God, neither tie the Gospel message to specific political or economic systems and theories.[5]

---

[1]John Paul II, "Opening Address," III, 6.

[2]Ibid., I, 8.

[3]Ibid., I, 4.

[4]Soon after his return to Rome from his visit to Mexico, during a general audience on February 21, the Pope seemingly attempted to dispel some of the "misunderstandings" that arose from his recent tour to Latin America, and praised some positive aspects of liberation theology" (NCR [March 2, 1979]:1, 18).

[5]See "Politics No, Justice Yes, Pope Tells Latin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

What can be said about Puebla? History requires distance, but some attempts have already been made at evaluating the bishops' conference.[1] Perhaps what Harvey Cox and Faith Annette Sand have said well summarizes what others have attempted to say: "What happened at Puebla? Not very much, really."[2] Jon Sobrino sees Puebla as a *step* ahead, in contrast with Medellín where a *leap* was taken; nevertheless, Puebla is "a quiet affirmation of Medellín."[3]

America," Our Sunday Visitor (February 11, 1979):1. In his visit to Brazil in July 1980, he maintained the same delicate balance. In an address delivered at Salvador da Bahia, he stated that "any society that does not want to be destroyed from within must establish a just social order"; but he hastened to add: "To say this is not to justify class struggle, for class struggle is doomed to sterility and destruction" ("Builders of a Just Society," TPS 26 /1981/:80).

[1]Kenneth L. Woodward, Newsweek's religious correspondent, wrote from Puebla that "the Puebla statement will stand as a mandate for social change which each bishop can interpret according to his own pastoral inclinations" ("A Church for the Poor," p. 97). For an excellent analysis of the different interpretations of Puebla written more than a year after the close of CELAM III, see Juan Carlos Scannone, "Various Latin American Interpretations of the Puebla Document," LumVit 35 (1980): 353-369. The entire issue of LumVit 34:4 (1979) is devoted to "Latin America Viewpoints on Puebla." See especially Ricardo Antoncich, "The Church's Social Doctrine at Puebla," pp. 349-479, and Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

[2]Harvey Cox and Faith Annette Sand, "What Happened at Puebla," ChrCris 39 (1979):57. They concluded that Puebla "does not betray Medellín even if it makes no great advances" (p. 59). See also Gerald McCarthy, "What Really Happened at Puebla?" The Month, 12 (1979): 77-79, 98.

[3]"A Quiet Affirmation of Medellín," TDig 28 (1980):13. C. René Padilla, looking at Puebla from a Protestant perspective, concurs with Sobrino's evaluation:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conclusion

The appearance of liberation theology on the Latin American theological scene represents a decided attempt to change the social, political, and economic structures of the continent, with the hope of achieving a more human and egalitatian society.[1]

After five centuries of colonialism and neo-colonialism--and sensing that misery and injustice are the daily lot of an increasing number of people—liberation theologians have taken a decided stance in favor of "the victims of the present structure," structures that disclose a situation of external dependence and internal domination. This situation is seen as sinful,[2] as totally incompatible with the Gospel, which demands its abolition.[3]

"CELAM III . . . will pass down in history as a continuation and deepening of CELAM II . . . but with a clearcut effort to steer the Church away from the so-called theology of liberation" ("CELAM III: A Gospel of Freedom and Justice," CT 23 /1979/:960). See the following essay in Eagleson, Puebla and Beyond; Jon Sobrino, "The Significance of Puebla for the Protestant Churches in North America," pp. 330-346.

[1]This egalitarian and free society, envisioned by liberation theology is one in which private ownership of the means of production will be eliminated and "political power will be at the service of the great popular majorities" (Gutiérrez, Liberation and Change, pp, 76-770.

[2]The localization of sin in the social structures--economic, political, and cultural--"is a typical contribution of the theology of liberation" (Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation," p. 340).

[3]Says Míguez Bonino: "In today's world there is only one way to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick and imprisoned--as Christ invited us to do: to change the structures of society which create and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Catholicism is accused of having been used to create and sustain the social pyramid in Latin America, where a few live in outrageous abundance while the masses live in misery, and now it is called to become an instrument to change the conditions it helped to create.[1] Gutiérrez argues that the Christian's lack of interest in temporal tasks in Latin America is due to a "religious formation, which regarded the 'beyond' as the sphere of the true life, /and/ made man's present life a kind of scenario in which he underwent a 'trial' that determined his eternal destiny."[2] The decade of the sixties saw the rise of "secular" theologies, with a strong disregard for the "vertical" and a concentrated emphasis on man and his temporal needs. Vatican II with its ecumenical interests reflected the existing mood of the times. This gave rise in Latin America--as well as in other parts of the world --among Roman Catholic theologians and liberal Protestants to an increasing interest for the social and horizontal aspects of life. This new concern, now ably articulated by an increasing number of theologians, is known as liberation theology,[3] whose fundamental concern

---

multiply every day those conditions" (Doing Theology, pp. 44).

[1]See Lernoux, "The Long Path," p. 5.

[2]"The Praxis of Liberation," p. 375.

[3]There is, in liberation theology, a radical shift of emphasis, as compared with traditional

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is with justice, the liberation of the oppressed;[1] liberation from all that deprives them of their true humanity.

The goal of liberation theology, then, is to change the world, not merely to interpret it.[2] In this effort, the emphasis is shifted from the "other world" to this one. In the words of Gutiérrez, "the theology of liberation is a theology of salvation in the concrete historical and political circumstances of today."[3] This does not mean that other aspects of salvation are pushed completely aside, but, "given the social reality of Latin America, it is legitimate to conclude that the political factor has a priority."[4]

---

theologies, from God and the supernatural to humanity, that is, the concerns become anthropocentric rather than theocentric. The influence of Marxism is clearly perceived in this shift. See Neely, "Liberation Theology in Latin America," pp. 345-348.

[1]Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation," p. 334.

[2]See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 15.

[3]Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The Hope of Liberation," in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., Mission Trends No. 5. Third World Theologies (New York: Paulist Press; and Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1976), p. 68.

[4]Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation," p. 341.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER II

SALVATION IN HISTORY

General Hermeneutical Considerations

One of the most significant developments in social analysis in the last fifteen years, as already noted, has been the emergence of the theme of "liberatio" vis-a-vis "development" in the Third World. The word *liberation*, as currently used in Latin America, is closely related to revolution, and calls for a total break with the system of domination which is seen as oppressive[1] and depicted as "institutionalized violence."[2] Informed by the conclusions of the social sciences, some theologians have come to speak of this situation as "sinful," thus making a qualitative leap from the socio-economic-political sphere to the religious domain,[3] and to see it as their responsibility

---

[1]Gutiérrez clearly states: "It is evident that only a break with the unjust order and a frank commitment to a new society can make the message of love which the Christian community bears credible to Latin Americans" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 138).

[2]See Assmann, Opresión-Liberación, p. 73.

[3]See Ricardo Antoncich, "Latin American Reality as the Hermeneutical Location for Theology" (In January of 1975, Antoncich, a Peruvian priest, gave a series of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to give a theological interpretation to the engagement of Christians in this process of liberation. In Juan Luis Segundo's words,

> Liberation theology was not born out of a theory, or in a laboratory; it is rather "pastoral" in origin; it was born out of a concrete reality: that of giving Christian theological backing to the Christians that became committed: it was necessary to go with them, to illuminate their actions. 1

Its Starting Point

In its attempt to be relevant to the Latin American reality and to assist the committed Christians in their liberating task, liberation theology departs methodologically from traditional theologies.[2] While most theologies start from some philosophical assumption regarding knowledge, revelation, the existence of God, nature, or man's Christian experience, liberation theology has a radically different starting point for its

---

eight lectures on liberation theology at the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago. This is lecture number two). In his view a situation of institutionalized violence exists when the poor suffers because "he cannot find work, when he has to get into those long lines at the government offices, when his children get sick as a result of malnutrition, when his children are not heard for justice's sake" (p. 11).

[1]"Condiciones actuales de la reflexión teológica en América Latina," p. 93.

[2]Orlando Costas observes that "just as Karl Barth's *Römerbrief* marks a break with nineteenth-century liberalism and Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of Hope with Barthian theology, so the theology of liberation constitutes a radical break with the theologies that have come out of Western Europe and North America in the past decades" (The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World /Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1974/, p. 224).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

reflection: a decided commitment to liberate the poor, oppressed, and marginalized people of Latin America. Due to economic and political conditions, the poor and ignored--who comprise the majority in Latin America--live at the margins of dignity, suffer, are deprived and, for the most part, left out. Helder Camara, in his typical way, offers a picturesque description of a "marginal":

> Anyone who has stood by the road trying to hitch a lift in a hurry and watched the motor cars flash past him, can understand what is meant by "marginal." A marginal person is someone who is left by the wayside in the economic, social, political and cultural life of his country. 1

Traditionally, theology, as elaborated in Europe and the United States, has worked from a context of affluence. Its essential preoccupation in modern times has been man's loss of faith in a scientific world. Therefore, it has been addressing, primarily, the "non-believer."[2] On the other hand, Latin American liberation

---

[1]The Desert Is Fertile (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1974), pp. 27-28. It is a historical fact that Latin America was born under a "cultural superposition," which has prevailed to the present. When the barbarians conquered Rome, they were, in turn, conquered culturally by the "overcome." But the *conquistadores* in America, to a great extent, leveled the native civilizations. See Vekemans, Teología de la liberación, pp. 43-51, where he discusses "marginalidad: rasgo característico de América Latina."

[2]See Gutiérrez, Liberation and Change, pp. 78-83. See also Geffré, A New Age in Theology, especially chap. 1 on "Recent Developments in Fundamental Theology," pp. 11-30, and Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, *passim*. Even Vatican II was oriented primarily to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

theology has as its immediate context the poverty of the vast majority of its people and the underdevelopment of the continent. The challenge, therefore, comes not from the non-believer--who belongs to a privileged minority--but from the non-person, that is to say, "from the individual that is not recognized as such by the existing order: the poor, the exploited, who are systematically deprived of being persons, they who scarcely know that they are persons."[1] Conscious of the inherited attitudes ingrained in the people's minds as a result of the history on the continent, Gutiérrez repeatedly points out that the poor man is not a "fatality," but rather the by-product of a system in which he lives.[2] He must not resign himself to his lot, for God is on his side.[3]

---

answer questions raised by modern man in developed countries, such as atheism and ecumenism. It is not surprising, then, that particular Latin American issues, like popular religiosity and institutionalized violence were not at the center of the Council's attention (See Oliveros Maqueo, Liberación y teología, p. 120).

[1]Ibid., p. 79. See Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator p. 46, and Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 5. Latin American liberation theologians stress that they begin theologizing from their own definite experience, hence they are less preoccupied with ideas.

[2]Gutiérrez, "The Praxis of Liberation," pp. 379-387.

[3]One of the underlining assumptions of liberation theology, as will be seen later, is that God is on the side of the poor, and that it is among the poor that He is at work. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the poor and oppressed, who delights to vindicate them in the eyes of their former oppressors. So is the God of the New Testament who becomes incarnate not in one who is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The poor, the non-person is not asking theoretical questions about invisible realities. While in the First World it may be fashionable for theologians to consider such questions as Is there life after death? in Latin America they are more concerned with the possibility of life after *birth*. The non-person is not asking, How can we believe in God in an age of science? but rather, How can we believe in God in a society that systematically crushes and destroys us?[1] The task of theology, then, according to Gutiérrez, is not how to proclaim God in an adult world, "but rather, how to announce him Father in a non-human world."[2] For the liberation theologian, any reflection which would start from another cultural context would have little attraction and would be useless for Latin America. It is with the poor and their situation that God is at work; they become the artisans of a new humanity; and as liberation theologians reflect on the Gospel, they arrive at what Assmann calls "the

---

rich, or has a good name, but in one who belonged to the poor. See Brown, Theology in a New Key, p. 61.

[1]Brown, Theology in a New Key, p. 64. At Detroit in 1975, Gutiérrez reiterated his concern: "*Our* question is rather how can we say to the poor, to the exploited classes, to the marginated races, to the despised cultures, to all the minorities, to the nonpersons--how can we say that God is love and say that all of them are, and ought to be in history, sisters and brothers. How can we say this? This is our great question" ("Statement by Gustavo Gutiérrez, p. 312).

[2]Liberation and Change, p. 79.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

epistemological privilege of the poor"[1]--i.e., that the way the poor view the world is closer to reality than the way the rich perceive it, for their situation is closer to that of the Biblical writers than is that of the rich.[2]

While many objections are raised regarding the "situationist" character of the hermeneutics of liberation theology,[3] liberation theologians are firm in maintaining that theology must start with an

---

[1]"Statement by Hugo Assmann," in Torres, Theology in the Americas, p. 300. He does not mean the poor in general, because in Latin America the poor have internalized the oppression, and in such a situation, cannot hear God's summons. He means "struggling" poor, with at least a beginning of class consciousness, class awareness. "The privileged poor of the Gospel are the struggling poor, struggling within a holistic perspective of revolution" (ibid.).

[2]Liberation theologians assume that the Bible, at least a major portion of it, was written by people whose social experience was powerlessness and oppression. Hence, the perspective on the activity of God in history that is given in Scripture can be better perceived by those who find themselves in a parallel situation with the Bible writers. According to Robert McAfee Brown, "The Bible was written out of the experience of oppressed people, by oppressed people as a message for liberation of oppressed people" ("Context Affects Content. The Rootedness of All Theology," ChrCris 37[1977-78]:172). It would seem, however, that much of the Old Testament was shaped, redacted, and edited by people associated with the royal court and the religious establishment, who were not necessarily identified with the oppressed. David, Solomon, and Isaiah, for example, did not write out of such experience.

[3]See Costas, The Church and Its Mission, pp. 251-153, and Bonaventure Kloppenburg, Temptations for the Theology of Liberation, Synthesis Series (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), pp. 9-13. Kloppenburg states that even though the situation is very important, and must be taken into consideration, it should be clearly asserted that "the situation is not the Gospel" (p.11).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

uncompromising act of solidarity with the poor rather than with any *a priori* universal truth.[1] Assmann argues that "the greatest merit of liberation theology is perhaps its insistence on the historic starting point of its reflection. . . . The situation of dominated (Latin) America."[2]

Gutiérrez sees liberation theology not so much as a new theme for reflection, but "as a *new way* to do theology."[3] More specifically he explains that

> Theology is reflection, a critical attitude. Theology *follows*. It is a second step. What Hegel used to say about philosophy can likewise be applied to theology: it raises a sundown. 4

---

[1]It would seem that liberation theology works from an *a priori* fully as dogmatic as any traditional theology does. According to Segundo, "a hermeneutic circle /his own methodology; see below/ in theology always presupposes a profound human commitment, a *partiality* that is consciously accepted--not on the basis of theological criteria, of course, but on the basis of human criteria" (The Liberation of Theology, p. 13). See also p. 34 n. 9.

[2]Opresión-Liberación, p. 24. Assmann further states that on this commitment to a historical starting point of liberation theology, "virtually all the documents so far published agree" (Theology for a Nomad Church, p. 53). Gutiérrez quotes Yves Congar approvingly: "Instead of using only revelation and tradition as starting points, as classical theology has generally done, it /the Church/ must start with facts and questions derived from the world and from history" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 12).

[3]A Theology of Liberation, p. 15. See Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 61.

[4]Ibid., p. 11. In 1979 in Puebla, as an "unofficial" consultant to CELAM III, he underlined even further his thesis: "Desde el comienzo dijimos que la teología es un acto segundo. El acto primero es el

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In other words and according to liberation theologians, in the first act, i.e., *praxis*, we commit ourselves with the poor to bring about a change in society, and in the second act, i.e., theology, we reflect on what happens in *praxis* and seek to relate it to the Word of God. Brown summarizes the procedure by noting that

> /theology/ is not a theory we impose on our life and our world, to which we expect our life and our world to conform; it is our way of thinking, as Christians, about what is going on in that life and in that world. 1

Juan Luis Segundo's book, The Liberation of Theology, is especially concerned with theological methodology.[2] Segundo believes that the "only thing that can maintain the liberating character of any theology is not its content but its methodology."[3] After acknowledging

---

compromiso con los pobres, con su vida, con sus sufrimientos, con sus luchas, con sus esperanzas. La teología viene después y es una reflexión que presupone el acto primero del compromiso" ("Lo importante es la liberación, no la teología," Proceso 118 /February 5, 1979/:9).

[1]Theology in a New Key, p. 72.

[2]This volume, published by Orbis, is an expansion of a course he gave at Harvard Divinity School in 1974. His purpose is not liberation theology *per se*, but as the title indicates, his main concern is to liberate the very doing of theology from its own unexamined methodological presupposition.

[3]Ibid., p. 40. For this reason--analyzing not so much the content as the method of theology in relation to liberation--Segundo's book "will probably prove far more significant in the long run than Gutiérrez' epoch-making initial study, A Theology of Liberation," comments J. Andrew Kirk, Theology Encounters Revolution (Downers

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that there are forces at work that threaten to destroy liberation theology,[1] he concludes that the time for epistemology has arrived. In other words, says Segundo, "liberation deals not so much with content as with the method used to theologize in the face of our real life situation."[2]

Segundo gives to the new method he develops the "pretentious" name of *hermeneutic circle*[3] and distinguishes four basic elements within it, as follows:

> *Firstly* there is our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion. *Secondly* there is the application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular. *Thirdly* there comes a new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, to the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account. *Fourthly* we have our new hermeneutic, that is, our new way of interpreting the fountainhead of

---

Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1980), 118.

[1]He points out three "tendencies": first, the oppressors accuse liberation theology of being subversive and intend to curb it; second, they adopted the terminology of liberation theology with different concerns, thus watering down its content, emptying it of all real meaning; and third, they criticized it for its naive and uncritical methodology. Ibid., pp. 4, 5.

[2]Ibid., p. 9.

[3]Segundo defines the hermeneutic circle as "the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal" (ibid., p. 8). This term has also been applied in the past to the exegetical approach of Bultmann, but Segundo believes that his method corresponds better to the strict sense of the circle. See p. 8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

faith (i.e., Scripture) with the new elements at our disposal. 1

He further clarifies the meaning of the hermeneutic circle through a detailed analysis of the works of four thinkers--Harvey Cox, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and James Cone,[2] and finds that in the case of Cox, Weber, and Marx the circle is not completed,[3] while Cone's Black theology of liberation does in fact complete the circle. In Cone we have a complete circle, according to Segundo, because, first, Black theology of liberation is based on a pre-commitment to liberation. Secondly, it analyzes the structure of American society including

---

[1]Ibid., p. 9. Segundo further explains that the first stage assumes a commitment to change the world while the third stage assumes a commitment to change theology. Ibid., p. 17.

[2]See pp. 20-38.

[3]Of special interest is to note why Segundo feels that Marx failed to complete the hermeneutic circle. Marx initially availed himself to the first stage, that is his choice between interpreting the world and changing it; next, he discovered historical materialism as a theory to help explain the reality of the world, while seeking to change it. But finally, instead of examining the specific and concrete possibilities of religion, he concluded that religion was at the service of the dominant classes, keeping the oppressed ignorant of the true reality and giving them false hopes to make them bear present sufferings. At this point he blundered affirming that religion is the opium of the people and that "the abolition of religion, as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness" (ibid., p. 17). Here is where the circle is interrupted. Marx, according to Segundo, never seemed to have suspected that ideology could have warped the thinking of the theologians and interpreters of Scripture; thus they ended up interpreting Scripture in a sense that served the interests of the ruling classes.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American theology, showing that it has been basically a theology of the white oppressor, giving religious sanction to the genocide of the Indians and the enslavement of Blacks. Thirdly, it interprets Scripture on the basis of the experience, history, and culture of Black people. Finally, Cone completes the circle when he says, "I want to know what God's revelation means right now as the Black community participates in the struggle for liberation."[1] Clearly, and Cone so indicates, the source of Black theology is "the experience, the history, and the culture of Black people rather than Scripture."[2]

To be able to do "liberation theology" it is not enough to know that there is misery and oppression, and that the historical situation should be our "text." Nor is it enough to read what others have done and adopt their methodologies. It is necessary to have personally gone through the painful *experience* of the hermeneutic circle; "one must develop the ideological suspicion without which there is not liberation theology."[3] Only this

---

[1]Ibid., p. 31.

[2]Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation, pp. 32, 33.

[3]González, Liberation Preaching, p. 52. This means to accept the reality of oppression, identify with the oppressed, and theologize out of the struggle for one's own liberation. Gutiérrez stresses the same idea when he writes that there will not be a real qualitative jump into another ideological perspective "until it comes from the social practice of the true Latin American people, of the people which has its earthly roots within the geography, the history, the indigenous race, and the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assumption, i.e., ideological suspicion, can make us sure that we are doing all that we can to rid Biblical interpretation of its traditionally oppressive bias.[1]

Liberation theologians denounce traditional theologies for being too theoretical, too far removed from the world, too prone to spiritualize away the liberating content of the Gospel. Traditionally, they say, theology has been almost exclusively concerned with the interpretation of a previously given faith, with a set of truths contained in Scriptures and handed down in tradition. The practical consequences of these "truths," then, with respect to the ethical, political, and social realms, was the responsibility of another set of specialists. This process is severely attacked by liberation theologians.[2] Gutiérrez points out that

The Church has for centuries devoted her attention to

---

culture of a profound and today silent people" (Liberation and Change, p. 88).

[1]Segundo's aim is not to eliminate tradition, but to rid it from its ideological bias. Paradoxically, however, a parallel aim of this book is to justify the necessity of ideologies. For Segundo, an ideology is a person's basic system of goals and values, plus the means necessary to achieve them. He does not use ideology in the pejorative sense of sacralization of vested interests. See his article, "Fe e ideología," Perspectivas de diálogo 9 (1974):227-233. See also Alfred T. Hennelly, "The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo," TS 38 (1977):128-129.

[2]See Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 88. It is cynical, they say, to theorize in "ivory towers," detached from the world and its needs, when in real life millions are starving and a few live in abundance.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> formulating truths and meanwhile did almost nothing to better the world. In other words, the Church focused on orthodoxy and left orthopraxis in the hands of nonmembers and nonbelievers. 1

Theology, they insist, must be active and practical, present in the world, not only to interpret it, but as an agent in its transformation.[2]

Praxis

The key word for this new approach--for this changing of the world-- is *praxis*,[3] a term borrowed from Marx.[4] When the term is used by Latin American

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 10. Here Gutiérrez quotes Schillebeeckx (The only bibliographical reference he gives is Schillebeeckx's article, "Los católicos holandeses," Bilbao: Disclée de Bower, 1970). See also Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, p. 46.

[2] In their final statement, "Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians," in 1976 at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the participants declared: "We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on the praxis of the reality of the Third World" (Torres, The Emergent Gospel, p. 269).

[3] See on this topic Charles Davis, "Theology and Praxis," CrossCur 23 (1973):154-168; Matthew Lamb, "The Theory-Praxis Relationship in Contemporary Christian Theology," Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention (New York: Manhattan College, 1976), pp 149-178, and Robert Kress, "Theological Method: Praxis and Liberation," Communio 6 (1979):113-134.

[4] Davis points out that the term *praxis* was introduced in the philosophical vocabulary by August Von Cieszkowski in the late 1830s, and was soon picked up by Marx; the use of praxis "reflected and helped the secularization and politization among young Hegelians, the shift from theology to politics, and provided the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

theologians, it has special reference to a Marxist analysis of society.[1] In the words of Gutiérrez, theology is "a critical reflection on Christian praxis on the light of the Word."[2]

The term does not necessarily mean practice, in the usual sense of theory being applied to a particular situation. *Praxis* describes rather a circular traffic that is always going on between action and reflection; "praxis," says Tracy, "is currently understood as a critical relationship between theory and practice whereby each is dialectically transformed by the other."[3] It calls for a particular kind of involvement informed by a particular kind of analysis, i.e., Marxism, the only methodology suited to disclose the reality of Latin America in the situation of dependence it finds itself in.[4]

---

content for the development of Marx" ("Theology and Praxis," p. 158).

[1]See Steven G. Macke, "Praxis as the Context for Interpretation. A Study of Latin American Liberation Theology," JThSAfrica 24 (1978):32-33, for a summary of the meaning of praxis in Marx. In Latin America the term is used to designate any activity aimed at political, economic, and social liberation; at the overcoming of alienation and oppression; at the creation of a new man in a new society.

[2]A Theology of Liberation, p. 13. Despite the obvious importance of the word *praxis*, in this new way of doing theology, nowhere does Gutiérrez clearly define its meaning.

[3]David Tracy, Blessed Rage of Order. The New Pluralism in Theology (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), p. 243.

[4]This methodology, referred to as *structuralist*, does not accept the system at face value but questions

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Liberation theology begins not only from a Marxist analysis of society's structures as oppressive, but from a practical identification with a process that aims at changing them. According to Gutiérrez, "to characterize Latin America as a dominated and oppressed continent naturally leads one to speak of liberation and above all to participate in the process."[1] This process of liberation--the taking of power away from the privileged minorities and giving it to the poor majorities--can hardly be envisioned as taking place naturally or peacefully because of the violent resistance of the minorities who have power. Therefore, "revolution is not only permitted, but it is obligatory for those Christians who see it as the only effective way of fulfilling love to one's neighbor."[2]

---

it from the perspective of the poverty-stricken masses. *Functionalism*, on the other hand, "takes such system at face value and seeks to discover those factors which are not *functioning* properly and are causing stagnation. Its goal is to improve the system so that it might function properly and permit growth. (Costas, The Church and Its Mission, pp. 226-227). Liberation theologians are convinced that the developmentalist approach is *passé* in Latin America, and argue that only a structuralist approach can offer any real hope.

[1]A Theology of Liberation, p. 88.

[2]Peter Wagner, Latin American Theology: Radical or Evangelical? (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 24. This is a quote from Gonzalo Castillo Cárdenas. L. John Topel argues that after the overthrow of Allende's government in Chile, the only alternative left for Latin America is violent revolution, wars of liberation aided by Cuban, Russian, or Chinese forces. The Way to Peace. Liberation through

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Praxis means also, for liberation theologians, that truth itself is known in a different way. The traditional way of knowing considers truth as the acceptance of a given contained propositionally in Scripture and tradition. But according to this new approach, in the words of Gutiérrez,

> There is another way of knowing truth--a dialectical one. In this case the world is not a static object which the human mind confronts and attempts to understand; rather, the world is an unfinished project which is being built. Knowledge is not the conformity of the mind to a given, but an immersion in this process of transformation and construction of a new world. 1

Liberation theologians begin from praxis because they perceive that action itself is truth. Truth is at the level of history, not in the realm of ideas. The Gospel truth is *done*; one must work out the truth rather than attempt to *discover* it intellectually. Truth is known, not in abstractness, but in praxis, in the midst of involvement in history.[2] Segundo observes that the

---

the Bible (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 191.

[1]Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Where Hunger Is, God Is Not," The Witness 60 (April 1977):5. This confirms the concept expressed by Marx in his eleventh thesis against Feuerbach in which he claims that the task is not to understand the world but to change it. See Gutiérrez, "The Praxis of Liberation," p. 389. It becomes evident that agreement with pregiven doctrines is unimportant; such criterion is characteristic of European theology; what counts is effectiveness in transforming history and liberating the oppressed. See on this point Jon Sobrino, "El conocimiento teológico en la teología europea y latinoamericana," in Ruiz Maldonado, Liberación y cautiverio, pp. 177-207.

[2]See Gutiérrez, "The Hope of Liberation," p. 65.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scriptural formula "doers of truth" is used by divine revelation to stress the priority of orthopraxis over orthodoxy when it comes to truth and salvation.[1] Correct praxis, i.e., truth, consists in being opposed to all that negates freedom to the oppressed, all that dehumanizes them, which means, according to Assmann, being "anti-imperialistic (and, on a national level, anti-oligarchic) *and* anti-technocratic. It embraces the struggle for a universal share of good sufficient to ensure basic human dignity, *and* the struggle for a free decision-making at all social levels."[2]

Polemizing against the dualistic understanding of theory and practice in the traditional theology, Sobrino concludes that Latin American theology

> Has tried to recover the meaning of the profound biblical experience regarding what it means to know theologically: to know the truth is to do the truth, to know Jesus is to follow Jesus; to know sin is to

---

Gospel support for this concept is readily found in Scriptures in the Johannine emphasis of "doing the truth" (John 3:21; 7:17, etc.). It should be remembered that John speaks not only of *doing* the truth but also of *knowing* the truth (John 8:32). In the words of Christ, "anyone who heard my words and puts them into practice" (Matt 7:24 NAB), implies that "practice" means "bearing fruit." See Luke 6-43.

[1] The Liberation of Theology, p. 36. See Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, pp. 86-105, for a thorough discussion of a liberationist perspective of "Hermeneutics, Truth and Praxis."

[2] Theology for a Nomad Church, p. 34. Italics his. Assmann adds that "reflection ceases to have a world of its own and becomes simply a critical function of action" (p. 74).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> dispose of sin, to know suffering is to free the world of suffering, to know God is to go to God in justice. 1

When Gutiérrez condemns the "epistemological split"[2] in traditional theology; when Assmann speaks of the rejection of "any logos which is not the logos of praxis";[3] when Míguez Bonino makes mention of a "deep epistemological cleavage,"[4] and Segundo states that "no liberating God is revealed outside . . . historical events,"[5] they are clearly saying that there is no truth outside or beyond the concrete historical events in which man participates as agent.[6] The criterion for knowing truth then, is not to be in agreement or disagreement with a previously given revelation, but with effectiveness in transforming history and liberating the oppressed. Historical praxis becomes the final tribunal where the truth or falsity of faith is judged. In the

---

[1] "El conocimiento teológico," p. 207.

[2] "Praxis de liberación y fe cristiana," p. 16. Quoted by Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 88.

[3] Opresión-Liberación, p. 87.

[4] José Míguez Bonino, "Five Theses Toward an Understanding of the 'Theology of Liberation'" ExpTim 8 (1975-76):198.

[5] The Liberation of Theology, p. 118.

[6] Truth, in the final analysis, is found only in the efficacy of praxis. Even in theological matters there can be no truth unless it is conditioned by historic efficacy. Only that which succeeds in the realm of action is truth. See Vekemans, "Panorámica actual," pp. 14, 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

final analysis, truth is what works. The verification question in this approach is a simple transference from biblical interpretation and theology to a scientific analysis of society.[1]

Social Sciences

Traditionally theology has used philosophical categories to articulate its understanding of the biblical message; hence the questions addressed by the theologians were mainly philosophical in nature. Does God exist? How can we believe in God in an age of science? How can we believe in an immutable God in a changing world? Is there life after death?, etc. The classic example of the use of philosophical categories to elaborate a theological system is Thomas Aquinas' use of Aristotle.[2] At this point liberation theology also breaks, for understandable reasons, with traditional

---

[1]Even admitting the ideological conditioning of all theology, if the Bible cannot break through to give light as to which ideology is better, we are left in a position that says "your theology isn't wrong and mine is right, they are just different" (Stephen C. Knapp, "A Preliminary Dialogue with Gutiérrez: A Theology of Liberation," in Armerding, Evangelicals and Liberation, p. 25). The likelihood of convincing a capitalist that he is wrong depends to a large extent on the unlikely possibility of his acceptance of the correctness of the Marxist social analysis.

[2]See James A. Weisheipl, "Thomas' Evaluation of Plato and Aristotle," The New Scholasticism 48 (Winter 1974):100-124; Oliva Blanchette, "Philosophy and Theology in Aquinas: On Being a Disciple in Our Day," ScSprit 28 (1976):23-53.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

theologies.[1] In Latin America, liberation theologians contend, the "non-person" is conditioned by the social rather than by the philosophical[2]--like the "non-believer" in Europe, for instance. This explains why the use of social sciences by liberation theology is so vital.[3]

If the theologian is to hear what God's revelation has to say about present-day Latin America, the concrete reality of the continent must be understood. Since the fundamental concern of liberation theology is with justice, with the liberation of the oppressed, it becomes indispensable to understand the structures of society in which these conditions exist. And the

---

[1]Given the historical starting point of this reflection--the poor, a decided commitment to change the oppressive structures--it is only natural that liberation theologians will direct their attention to a different set of tools to assist them in expressing their understanding of the Gospel. See Luis Alberto Gómez de Souza, "Los condicionamientos socio-políticos actuales de la teología en América Latina," in Ruiz Maldonado, Liberación y cautiverio, pp. 69-81.

[2]The terms of this analysis of reality were not discovered or developed by theologians. They represent a breakthrough in Latin American social sciences, occasioned by the failure of the developmentalist plans in the continent. See Míguez Bonino, "Five Theses," p. 197.

[3]Segundo Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation. A General Survey," LumVit 33 (1978):335. Gutiérrez points out in this connection, that "the understanding of faith is also following along new paths in our day . . . The social sciences, for example, are extremely important for theological reflection in Latin America" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 5). This does not imply that liberation theologians, by giving prominence to the social sciences as aids, totally disregard philosophy. It simply plays a very secondary role (Gutiérrez quotes Plato and Aristotle only twice each in his book).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

social sciences--sociology, economics, political science, anthropology--are used to examine the context in Latin America. In the words of Leonardo Boff, liberation theology uses social sciences

> To analyze the causes of this poverty and misery, to see the causal nexus; because poverty is not born by spontaneous generation, neither does it fall from heaven; rather it is generated by unjust relations among men. 1

What is the best option to uncover the human and political dimensions of the historical reality of Latin America? The most viable option would appear to be the one that analyzes the situation from the perspective of the masses, the oppressed people of the continent. That is why Marxism is considered as the most probable political option in present Latin America to solve the social problems created by four centuries of colonialism and imperialism.[2] Berryman observes that in Latin America it "is the reality itself which impels Christians to go

---

[1]Leonardo Boff, "La iglesia es el sacramento de liberación," Proceso 118 (February 5, 1979):11. See also Xabier Gorostiaga, "Transnacionales, motor de pobreza Iberoamericana," pp. 14-16 for a fuller discussion of the function of social sciences in theology. To the accusation, frequently raised that liberation theology is really "liberation sociology," they quickly respond, as does Galilea, that no one accuses Thomas of being a "philosophist" for having used liberally Aristotle's conceptions, "The Theology of Liberation," p. 335. Even when Thomas is not "accused" of being a "philosophist," it doesn't mean that all agree that the cause of truth was advanced by his synthesis.

[2]Lernoux points out that Marx helped Latin Americans to clarify their situation of neocolonial dependence on capitalism, through knowledge of reality which

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

back to Marx."[1] This does not mean that all liberation theologians accept Marxism uncritically,[2] but all acknowledge their debt to it. In the words of Segundo

---

is the first step in the transformation of society ("The Long Path," p. 10).

[1]Phillip E. Berryman, "Latin American Liberation Theology," TS 34 (1973):374. The growing acuteness of economic and social problems in Latin America makes it clear to many people that socialism is the only viable alternative to "dependent capitalism" with its resultant underdevelopment. See Eagleson, Christians and Socialism, p. 165. The Puebla document rejected this view that rules out all other alternatives" (Art. 561).

[2]Medellín condemns Marxism--even though its analysis of the social, economic, and political situation of the continent is clearly Marxist--together with capitalism for militating "against the dignity of the human person" (Conclusions, "Justice," Art. 10). Even the Puebla document came out strong, in some places, in its denunciation of Marxism: "All the concrete historical experiments of Marxism have been carried out within the framework of totalitarian regimes that are closed to any possibility of criticism and correction" (Art. 544). It has "sacrificed many Christian, and hence, human values" (Art. 48). " . . . the consequences are the total polarization of Christian experience, the desintegration of the language of faith into that of the social sciences" (Art. 545). Brown distinguishes three ways in which Marxism is being appropriated. First, Marxism is taken by some as a world-view, an all-encompassing framework. This means the acceptance of insights about historical materialism, the inevitability of class struggle, etc. For others, Marxism is not so much a total world view as it is a plan for political action. For still others, it is chiefly an instrument of social analysis. Brown suggests that the majority of liberation theologians find themselves in this last group (Theology in a New Key, p. 66). After reading Gutiérrez, Assmann, Segundo, and others, Brown's conclusion becomes difficult to accept. Héctor Borrat reminds us that at Santiago, "Assmann was the author of the ultra-leftist, Marxist-oriented preparatory paper," and that Gutiérrez improved the poor 'theology of that paper in the final one /Christians and Socialism/" ("Liberation Theology in Latin America," Dial 13 /1974/:174). Assmann admits, "I am a Marxist and I can't see the reality of Latin America in any other category" (Gayrand Wilmore and James Cone, eds., Black

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Whether everything Marx said is accepted or not, and in whatever way one may conceive his "essential" thinking, there can be no doubt that present-day social thought will be "marxist" to some extent: that is, profoundly indebted to Marx. In this sense Latin American theology is certainly Marxist. 1

One of the basic questions that should be raised at this juncture is whether Marxism can be used as a tool of scientific analysis without at the same time, adopting its anthropology--not to mention its atheistic *Weltanschauung*. Most liberation theologians seem to believe they can. Dom Helder Camara, for instance, is clear in his political option: "I am a socialist"; and adds, "I think we can avail ourselves of the Marxist method of analysis, which is still valid, leaving aside the materialistic conception of life."[2] If Thomas Aquinas was

---

Theology: A Documentary History: 1966-1979 /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979/, p. 513).

[1]Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, p. 35. Gutiérrez points out that "it is to a large extent due to Marxism's influence that theological thought, searching for its own sources, has begun to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of this world and the action of man in history (A Theology of Liberation, p. 9). José Porfirio Miranda observes that somehow "we are all riding on Marx's shoulders," and that even "the /late/ encyclicals take their diagnosis of society from Marx" (Marx and the Bible. A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1974/, p. xiii.

[2]Quoted in Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, pp. 46, 47. This "qualified acceptance" of Marxism is apparent in José Míquez Bonino, especially in Christians and Marxists. The Mutual Challenge to Revolution (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976). Míguez Bonino points out that the book is written "from the point of view of a person who confesses Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior" (p. 7); and also contends that Marxism, as a socio-analytical tool, "is indispensable for revolutionary change" (p. 8).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

able to produce a new theological system--i.e., medieval theology based on the philosophy of a non-Christian philosopher, Aristotle--there is no reason, they say, why theologians today could not create a Christian theology with the help of Marx, another non-Christian.[1] Besides, Marxism is the social reality under which millions live today, and while many despise his teachings, "Marx irresistibly attracts millions of human beings, especially young people . . ."[2]

For a fair evaluation of Míguez Bonino see Harvie M. Conn, "Theologies of Liberation: An Overview," in Stanley Gundry and Alan Johnson, eds., Tensions in Contemporary Theology, rev. 3rd. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979, p. 372.

[1]See Helder Camara's interesting discussion, "What Would St. Thomas Aquinas Do if Faced with Karl Marx?" NCW (May-June, 1977):108-113. He observes that Aristotle was regarded by Thomas' contemporaries, "as a pagan, a materialist, a dangerous and cursed sinner" (p. 108). Still, Thomas was able to "leave out" the dangerous aspects of Aristotle's thought, and benefit from the positive. Likewise, says Camara, there are "some aspects of the Marxist system that are Christian truths, although they are immersed in a whole system that vows to be atheistic and materialist" (p. 112). See also Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation," p. 335, and Gary MacEoin, "Marx with a Latin Beat" CrossCur 21 (1971):269-275. Pedro Arrupe, the Jesuit Superior General, in a letter to the Jesuit Provincials of Latin America, argues against Camara, that it is not possible to accept the set of explanations that constitute Marxist analysis without subscribing to Marxist philosophy, ideology, and politics: "Those who adopt the /Marxist/ analysis also adopt this strategy" (Origins 10 /1981/: 692.

[2]Ibid., p. 108. We should add that Camara does not see in contemporary Marxist systems the solution for Latin America. "I don't see the solution in the socialist governments that exist today . . . the record is awful,"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Within the past few years several attempts have been made to establish a basis for communication between Christians and Marxists.[1] The genesis of the Christian-Marxist dialogue can be traced back to the year 1955, when N. Kruschev denounced Stalinist excesses and encouraged a new openness among Communist parties, especially in the West.[2] In Latin America, although it is difficult to

---

writes he (quoted in Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 47). Nor is Cuba, twenty years after the revolution, considered as the inspiration and model to follow, in spite of Theo Tschuy's enthusiastic appraisal of the Cuban situation in 1971 as "one of the miracles of modern times" (CrossCur 21 /1971/:335). It is seen more and more as a totalitarian society in which nearly every form of dissent is severely punished, and every social institution, including family, church, neighborhood, and workplace, is subjected to the interference and control of one party and one ideology (See John W. Cooper, "The Cuban Revolution: An Exchange. A Challenge for John Bennett," ChrCris 40 /1980/:203-206). Robert Kress has observed that "twenty years after the Revolution, Cuba is still a one-crop country, more dependent on sugar than ever. Poverty has not so much been eliminated as spread around through rationing, for Castro has not succeeded in making Cuba grow economically. In fact, one could say that he traded Uncle Sam for Mother Russia, who provides a daily subsidy of 8.000.000 dollars" ("Theological Method: Praxis and Liberation," Communio 6 /1979/:131.

[1]There has been a plethora of publications focusing on the dialogue (See JES 15 /1078/). The entire issue is devoted to "Varieties of Christian-Marxist Dialogue." See also Roger Garaudy, "Christian-Marxist Dialogue," JES 4 (1967):207-222; Antony Cuschieri, "The Christian-Marxist Encounter," CrossCur 27 (1977):279-298; Paul Mojzes, "Christian-Marxist Dialogue: Soviet and American Style," CrossCur 28 (1978):159-166.

[2]An excellent study on the background of this "dialogue" can be found in Nicholas Piediscalzi, et al, eds., From Hope to Liberation: Towards a New Marxist-Christian Dialogue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). At first these encounters were exclusively dominated by participants of First and Second Worlds and dealt mainly with theoretical questions. The second stage began later

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pinpoint an exact date for the beginning of such encounters, the establishment of a Communist regime in Cuba in 1959 unquestionably sparked interest in the dialogue.[1] Shepherd Bliss rightly observes that Latin Americans, however, do not emphasize Christian-Marxist *dialogue*, but rather Christian-Marxist *praxis*.[2] There is clearly a conscious effort to find a common ground on which to work for the liberation of the continent without stressing the obvious differences.[3] From the Christian

---

in the Third World countries, and the interest shifted to more practical issues.

[1]It is interesting to note that there is no Christian-Marxist dialogue among Christians and Marxists in the Soviet Union. And while Marxists are outnumbered by Christians there, the Christians have no political influence (See Mojzes, "Christian-Marxist Dialogue," p. 159.

[2]"Latin America--Where Dialogue Becomes Praxis," in Piediscalzi, From Hope to Liberation, p. 91.

[3]A good example of this approach can be found in Eugene C. Bianchi, "Points of Convergence in the Christian-Marxist Dialogue," Encount 36 (1975):37-52. An entire issue of the JES (15 /Winter 1978/), has been devoted to exploring the "Varieties of Christian-Marxist Dialogue." See also Fernando Moreno, Christianismo y marxismo en la teología de la liberación (Santiago: Escuela Lito-tipográfica Salesiana, 1977). Peter Hebblethwaite has insightfully remarked that as a consequence of these efforts, Marxism has invaded the Church, not as the result of some fiendish plot, "but no one has so far suggested that Marxism leads into Christianity. The crucial determining element in the synthesis is Marxism. Christianity, therefore, is not so much synthesized as used and subordinated. When the crunch comes, it is Christianity that has to go" ("Christians and Instrumental Marxism," The Month 8 /1975/:317).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

perspective the new openings toward dialogue with Marxism, both at the level of idea and of practice, came from a number of scholars whose writings showed an interest in secular theology. When liberation theologians speak of social sciences as their primary tool for interpreting reality, they mean Marxism, and it is precisely the "scientific" dimension of the Marxist analysis that fascinates many people, to the point that some feel an "inferiority complex" vis-à-vis Marxism. Sensing that the Gospel lacks this scientific character, they feel like "unarmed soldiers" in their responsibility to the world and see in Marxism the providential supplementation to this lack.[1] Without denying the genuine intentions of those Christians who join in dialogue with Marxism, Vree's conclusion would seem inevitable: "Marxism and Christianity are disjunctive belief systems that cannot be fused without doing violence to the integrity of both."[2]

---

[1]For an excellent analysis of this topic, see Georges Cottier, Esperanzas enfrentadas: Cristianismo y marxismo (Bogotá: CEDIAL, 1975). He examines some of the "scientific" basis of Marxism, concludes that they are mainly "pretentions," and finds a total lack of any critical questioning, by these authors, to the scientific validity of their instrument. See p. 326. See also Klaus Bockmuehl, The Challenge of Marxism. A Christian Response (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1980).

[2]Dale Vree, On Synthesizing Marxism and Christianity (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), p. 178. The author is not against dialogue in the sense of talking to each other; "no great harm is done to Christianity if Christians collaborate with Marxists in the building of a better society--so long as the Christians are under no illusions that they are engaged in salvific or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is a fact that participants in this dialogue find it increasingly difficult to communicate with the "traditionalists" of their own persuasions. As Moltmann has pointed out, "nowdays you often find yourself in more accord with reformers in the other camp that with the conservatives in your own."[1] The attempt to isolate Marxism as a systemic whole must realize that inherent to Marxism is an anthropology rooted in the Enlightenment, i.e., man has in himself the power to transform himself and society.[2] This view of man is regarded by many as totally inimical to the Biblical view of man. Thus the Catholic bishops at Puebla reaffirmed the traditional teaching of the magisterium on this points, i.e., that "qualified acceptance" of Marxism is unrealistic.

> It would be foolish and dangerous on that account to forget that they /the various aspects of Marxism/ are clearly linked to each other; to embrace certain

---

redemptive activity" (pp. 178, 179). Nevertheless, he questions the whole enterprise of hoping to achieve a synthesis. Bockmuehl states that given the presuppositions of each, it is clear that Marxism and Christianity cannot be thought of as complementing each other; and that wherever a synthesis has been attempted, "Marxism gave the instructions for action and Christianity was reduced to motivational faith" (The Challenge of Marxism, p. 120). Even when these authors do not write from a Latin American perspective, their general conclusions are certainly valid there as well.

[1]Moltmann, "Politics and the Practice of Hope," P. 290.

[2]See on this topic two excellent articles by J. Andrew Kirk, "The Meaning of Man in the Debate between Christianity and Marxism." Themelios 1 (1976):41-49, 85-93.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> elements of Marxist analysis without taking due account of their relation with its ideology; and to become involved in the class struggle and the Marxist interpretation of it without paying attention to the kind of violent and totalitarian society to which this activity leads. 1

Role of Scripture

What role does the Bible play in this *new way* of doing theology? Is it normative, or does it play merely a secondary, supportive role?

We have noticed earlier that the starting point in liberation theology is a definite commitment to liberate the poor and marginalized people of the Latin American continent. The "historical reality" of Latin America is arrived at with the help of the social sciences,[2] --without excluding the postulates of Marxism--which are regarded as disclosing reasons for the poverty and stagnation in that part of the world. They also indicate that the only way out of the predicament is liberation, i.e., a complete change of structures--political, economic,

---

[1]Puebla "Final Document," Art 544. This is a quote from Pope Paul VI's *Octogesima Adveniens*, Art. 544. (An English translation of this encyclical can be found in Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and Justice, pp. 485-512).

[2]Interestingly, Míguez Bonino comments, half way through his book, "it may seem strange to devote half of a book supposedly dealing with theology to a discussion of sociological analysis and political trends and options, only to arrive belatedly to the consideration of the theology that undergirds the positions taken by Christians" (Doing Theology, p. 61). Gutiérrez, in his A Theology of Liberation, begins to quote the Bible on page 155, after an extensive discussion on the nature of salvation in the first half of the book.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

social. In the methodology of liberation theology, the "text," the first theological reference point, as the historical situation. Other sources--Scripture, tradition, magisterium, history of doctrine--are not sources of truth as such; they must be connected with the *now* of truth-praxis.[1]

After *praxis*--i.e., engagement in certain political practices, a renovation of society on behalf of the poor--comes reflection about this praxis as Christians,[2] and only then, as a third step, liberation theologians go to the Bible and Christian tradition to develop their theology.[3] In Detroit, in 1975, Assmann made a clear reference to the place the Bible occupies in liberation theology:

> The Word of God in no longer a fixed absolute, an eternal proposition we receive before analyzing social conflicts and before committing ourselves to the transformation of historical reality. God's summons to us, God's Word today, grows from the collective process of historical awareness, analysis,

---

[1]See Assmann, Opresión-Liberación, p. 414. He points out, "ya no nos bastan las perspectivas usuales de los exégetas que trabajan sobre el texto sagrado," porque nosotros queremos "trabajar la realidad de hoy" (Ibid.).

[2]By "Christians" here is meant a minority of Christians who are socially and politically involved, totally committed to the struggle for justice, and not Christians in general.

[3]The fact that Gutiérrez uses the content of papal encyclicals more liberally than Scripture indicates where he places greater revelatory value. On this count he is more in line with Roman Catholic tradition in his theological reflection than with the Protestant.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> and involvement, that is, from praxis. The Bible and the whole Christian tradition do not speak directly to us in our situation. But they remain as a basic reference about how God spoke in quite a different context, which must illuminate his speaking in our context. 1

Scripture certainly remains an integral part of this theology, but less as a "given" directly inspired by God than as a "witness" to what God has done in the past, whose meaning can only be grasped in the context of historical praxis. Therefore, since liberation theology develops out of the experience of the poor in search of liberation, "the political question is the first one that we must ask as we approach any biblical passage."[2] From the previous commitment there naturally follows a tendency to be selective in the use of Scripture, to make use of themes like Exodus and liberation, to the neglect of other biblical themes such as sin, justification, substitution, that do not yield immediate meaning in the

---

[1]"Statement by Hugo Assmann," in Torres, Theology in the Americas, p. 299. See also Claude Geffré, A New Age in Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), pp. 64-66.

[2]Justo L. González and Catherine G. González, Liberation Preaching. The Pulpit and the Oppressed (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), p. 69. By "political," González means the manner in which God intervenes in response "to the power or powerlessness of various individuals or groups of people" (p. 70). Several examples are given as to how a text can be interpreted "politically." In some occasions it seems that what really happens is that a "political twist" has been put into the understanding of these texts, which is not easy to see there apart from this definite presupposition. See Clark H. Pinnock, "Liberation Theology: The Gain, The Gaps," CT 20 (1975-56):391.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

struggle for liberation. Without the slightest hesitation Segundo justifies this approach:

> I hope that it is quite clear that the Bible is not the discourse of a universal God to a universal man. Partiality is justified because we must find, and designate as the Word of God, that *part* of divine revelation which *today*, in the light of our concrete historical situation, is most useful for the liberation to which God summons us. 1

At the beginning of his book Gutiérrez defines liberation theology "as a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word."[2] After reading the whole volume, however, one wonders how much light has the written Word, in fact, cast on the issues under discussion. It would seem that a more appropriate way of defining the relationship between Scripture and praxis in this approach would be to say that liberation theology is a hermeneutic of the Word of God in the light of revolutionary praxis. This commitment to revolutionary praxis leads to a "new way of reading the Bible," clearly anticipated in the Santiago document:

> Theological reflection assumes that an indispensable prerequisite for carrying out its task is a socio-analytical methodology that is capable of critically grasping the conflictive nature of historical reality. This leads the Christian, in a Spirit of authentic faith, to a new reading of the Bible and Christian tradition. It poses the basic concepts and symbols of Christianity anew, in such a way that they do not hamper Christians in their commitment to

---

[1]Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, p. 33. Segundo's italics.

[2]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the revolutionary process but rather help them to shoulder these commitments in a creative way. 1

The potential for syncretism and adulteration is unusually high in a theology that has as its starting point the sinful human situation, and thus relegates the Bible to a secondary role. Likewise the danger to slide into subjectivism and situationism seems inevitable.[2] This is not to deny that the human situation--whatever it might be--should affect one's reading of the Bible. The Bible must speak clearly and unmistakably to man in any situation it finds him, but this *contextualization*[3] must not reduce the Word to our situation; the Word must still be able to instruct us and to judge us.

---

[1]Eagleson, Christians and Socialism, p. 174. Some liberation theologians quote the Bible freely, but often the texts are quoted without much regard for the context or for exegesis. One soon gets the impression that they are used to support the "pre-commitment" to revolutionary change developed totally outside the Bible's orbit.

[2]As Yves Congar has well said, "Está bien querer entender lo que la Escritura tiene que decir*nos*. Es un abuso y un desorden introyectar en ella como *su* sentido *nuestras* preocupaciones . . . El peligro de la hermenéutica consiste en que, al querer reactualizar el texto para nosotros . . . lo reduzca a *nuestra* actualidad, a nuestras categorías" (Quoted in Roger Vekemans, "Panorámica actual," p. 30.

[3]For an excellent study of this very current theme, see Leslie Newbigin, "Context and Conversion," IRM 68 (1979):301-312. Using the example of Ezekiel, who sat where they sat, "overwhelmed among them," he argues that the preacher "can only speak at all if he is speaking from within the world which they inhabit. But this does not mean that he accepts their analysis of their situation. To do this is the temptation of 'contextual theology'" (p. 302). See also Harvie M. Conn, "Contextualization: Where Do We Begin?" in Carl E. Armerding, Evangelicals and Liberation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 90-119. In January of 1978 a first

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It would seem that out of a valid concern to make the Gospel relevant to the poor, and as a means of effecting their liberation, liberation theology has selected "a canon within the canon," in which the Bible merely is "a book of illustrations for a story written from other sources."[1]

---

class journal, Theology in Context, began to appear quarterly with the purpose of encouraging dialogue on the subject of contextualization. One of the most extreme examples of this *contextualization* is found in Everardo Ramírez Toro, Evangelio latinoamericano de la liberación (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1976). The birth narrative, as an example, is "translated" in the following way:

> "Nacido, pues, Jesús en Macondo /a small and forgotten town in Colombia/, en tiempos del presidente Nixon Bloodthirsty, unos astrólogos que venían de tierras lejanas, se presentaron en la capital del imperio Moneyland, preguntando: ¿Dónde ha nacido el liberador del pueblo? Hemos visto su estrella en el cielo y venimos a conocerlo. . . . Entonces Nixon Bloodthirsty, el opresor, al ver que había sido burlado por los astrólogos, se enfureció terriblemente y envió a marines para que mataran a todos los niños menores de dos años en Macondo y todos sus alrededores" (p. 14).

In this new version of the Gospel John the Baptist becomes Juan Allende (p. 15); we read of Peter Guevara and Andrew, his brother (p. 20); "no piensen que he venido a traer el conformismo a la tierra. No he venido a traer el conformismo, sino la rebeldía y la lucha contra la opresión" (p. 19). Jesus was killed by "una ráfaga de ametralladora" (p. 89). But on the third day the people, with music and songs, took it to the streets "proclamando que Jesús, el libertador, vive en el pueblo y en el corazón de todos aquellos que aman la justicia social y buscan la liberación" (p. 84). The word "liberación" or its derivatives occur 348 times in seventy-eight pages, that is an average of almost five times a page. See Bonaventure Kloppenburg, The People's Church. A Defense of my Church (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978, p. 67.

[1]Knapp, "A Preliminary Dialogue," p. 24. See the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hermeneutics of Exodus

The Centrality of the Exodus

The situation of restlessness and anxiety in which Latin America finds itself, due to widespread poverty and oppression, has awakened a current theological reflection that centers on the responsibility of the Christian regarding the present reality of the continent. In the present situation--depicted by such words as oppression, dependence, exploitation, marginalization, poverty--the experience of the Israelites' liberation from Egyptian bondage, i. e., the *Exodus*,[1] comes readily to mind. This experience, as recorded in the book of Exodus, has suddenly been seen as containing a clear and direct message for God's people today:

> I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land flowing

---

well-documented essay by J. Andrew Kirk, "The Bible in Latin American Liberation Theology,"in Norman Gottwald, ed., The Bible and Liberation (Berkeley: Community for Religious Research and Education, 1976), pp. 156-165.

[1]The theme of the Exodus, especially the image of the Church as an exodus community, was made popular in our day by Jurgen Moltmann. The last chapter of his Theology of Hope is entitled "Exodus Church." His main emphasis, though, is not on an Exodus theology, but rather on hope on the present moment. The Exodus is simply one among other images serving to outline the community's attitude of hope.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> with milk and honey . . . bring thy people, the sons or Israel, out of Egypt. [1]

As the Israelites in Egypt cried under the heavy hand of their taskmasters, so also today the people of Latin America, oppressed under injustice and misery, cry for a liberating exodus. Emilio Castro sees a clear parallel between the two situations:

> When we see multitudes of people coming down from the mountains or from the fields toward the city in search of a better future, oftentimes comes to our minds the scene of the people of Israel leaving Egypt and looking for the promised land. They also were a desperate people . . . What could be the difference between the Latin American masses of today, searching for the promised land, and the Israelites of yesterday crossing the Red Sea? . . . What could happen in Latin America if the churches would dare to play the role of Moses, and would tell this people, that it is not only their misery that drives them to the city, nor the secular phenomenon of urbanization, but that it is the presence of the promise, God's call summoning to a more human life. [2]

The Medellín documents, too, contain a clear --and afterwards often quoted--reference to the Exodus. They make clear that Israel, as the first People, felt the saving presence of God when they were delivered from the oppression of Egypt by the passage through the Red Sea that led them to the promised land. So Latin America, as "the new People of God," cannot cease to feel his saving passage in view of "true development, which is

---

[1] Exod 3:8-10.

[2] Quoted in Roberto Sartor, "Exodo-Liberación," RBibArg 33 (1971):76.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the passage for each and all, from conditions of life that are less human, to those that are more human."[1]

To no one's surprise, therefore, the Exodus became central, "the privileged text" of Scripture for liberation theology. Gutiérrez underlines its centrality when he points out, quoting Casalis, that "the heart of the Old Testament is the Exodus from the servitude of Egypt and the journey towards the promised land."[2]

Despite the centrality of the event they narrate, the texts that record the Exodus are hardly given any extensive examination by Gutiérrez or other liberation theologians in general.[3] Attention is given essentially

---

[1]Conclusions, "Introduction," Art. 6. (The quotation is from *Populorum Progressio*, Art. 21).

[2]A Theology of Liberation, p. 157. See also Assmann, Opresión-Liberación, pp. 71-73. "El motivo del Exodo es mencionado con frecuencia impresionante en los documentos actuales de América Latina" (p. 71). While the centrality of the Exodus is stressed, the well-known parallel of "Deutero-Isaiah" is called the "best witness to the Exodus (p. 155). Also certain Psalms--74, 89, 93, 135, 136--are often referred to.

[3]The more extensive exegetical study of the Old Testament from a liberation theology perspective is the work of José Porfirio Miranda, Marx and the Bible. Miranda's main thesis is that God's will is to establish justice on behalf of the oppressed; in fact, this is his only purpose. Marxist presuppositions are clearly controlling his work. John L. McKenzie, with strong language, expresses his conviction: "I have to say that Miranda studied the Bible well enough to learn just what omissions and distortions are necessary to bring the Bible into harmony with Marx" (JBL 94 /1975/:281). Typical of Miranda's conclusions are his words, "but frankly I do not see how there can be an authentic compassion for the oppressed without there being at the same time indignation against the oppressor" (p. 47).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to the theme, rather than to details worthy of exegetical study. The relevance and actuality of the Exodus are brought to the forefront on the basis that God's people today are passing through experiences that are, in many respects, similar to those the Israelites went through in Egypt: "repression," "alienated work," "humiliation," "enforced birth control policy."[1] This is the reason why "the Exodus experience is paradigmatic. It remains vital and contemporary due to similar historical experiences which the People of God undergo."[2] The conclusion, therefore, is clear: "to accept poverty and injustice is to fall back to the conditions of servitude which existed before the liberation from Egypt. It is to retrogress."[3]

The Bible Begins with Exodus

Liberation theologians show little interest in any careful exegetical study of Scripture, even of those Bible texts that are foundational to their theology. They work from some clearly defined assumptions, however, that are accepted rather than argued. One of these assumptions, on which this "new theology" builds, is

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 156. These similarities are derived from the content of the initial chapters of the book of Exodus.

[2]Ibid., p. 159.

[3]Ibid., p. 295.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

derived from contemporary studies in the Old Testament which have stressed the social and historical character of the religion of Israel and have seen the Bible as the record of God's saving acts on behalf of his people, mainly in the communal life.[1] This concentration on the "social" and "historical" has given the Exodus a prominence never before enjoyed in Old Testament studies.

In recent Old Testament studies, there appears to be a general consensus that in spite of the fact that the creation stories are placed at the beginning of the canonical Scripture, creation was not the first article of faith of Israel, but one that emerged from a faith that was centered on the actions of God in history. Claus Westermann, the noted Old Testament German scholar, asserts quite plainly:

> Actually the Bible does not begin with Genesis 1 but with Exodus 1. It is here that the biblical history in the strict sense has its beginnings. . . . It is prefaced by two pre-histories: that of the patriarchs and the primeval stories. Both of these segments were added later to the history which begins with the Exodus from Egypt, and have been drafted in the light of it. 2

Von Rad, whom Gutiérrez quotes enthusiastically,[3]

---

[1]This way of understanding the message of the Bible as primarily social and historical facilitates the use of the key symbols of exodus and liberation. See John Langan, "Liberation Theology in a Northern Context," America 140 (1979):46-49.

[2]The Genesis Accounts of Creation, Facet Books (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 2

[3]Gutiérrez states that Von Rad based his studies

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

speaks of the necessity of a radical correction to the suspiciously simple picture drawn from many theological studies of the Old Testament, "and which is particularly widespread in the unlearned world as the result of the circumstances that Gen 1 stands at the beginning of the Bible."[1]

Creation faith in Israel is said to be a comparatively late development, the two different accounts being of late composition.[2] It was in the miraculous deliverance from Egypt, especially in the crossing of the Red Sea, that the Israelites became acquainted with their God, because "it is in history that God reveals the secret of his person."[3]

"on a rigorous exegesis of the Old Testament" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 162. Even though Von Rad is quoted only a half a dozen times in A Theology of Liberation, he has exerted a strong influence on Gutiérrez's approach to the Old Testament.

[1]Gerhard Von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 132, 133.

[2]The second of the two accounts (Gen 2:4b-25) of the Yahwist tradition is supposed to have come, in its current form from the ninth century B.C. The first account (Gen 1:1-1:4a) of considerably later origin, was composed in its current form possibly as late as the fifth century B.C., and belongs to the priestly tradition. See Thorlief Boman, "The Biblical Doctrine of Creation," CQR 15 (1964):140-151.

[3]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 189. The author is in fact quoting Von Rad. Walter Zimmerli points out, "It is hardly possible to overlook the fact that in what the Old Testament has to say, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, an event in the midst of history, furnishes the primary orientation" (Old Testament

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is emphasized that the center of the Old Testament religion is God's mighty and merciful leading of the people of Israel out of Egypt through Moses, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the subsequent protection during the wilderness wanderings. This experience became in a sense the starting point, the source and foundation of the later religious faith in Israel. And thus, belief in creation arose out of these experiences as a natural, logical conclusion. From the Exodus Israel looked back to creation, confessing that this God, who was active at the beginning of its history, was likewise active at the beginning of the world.[1] Boman summarizes rather well what is thought to have happened in this development:

> Originally Israel believed that Yahweh had to do only with them, but later the horizon extended; he was conceived as having power over neighbouring peoples, over the great nations, over mankind and over nature. His power also extended in time: his almighty power revealed in the time of Moses extended forwards to the contemporary generation and further to the future, and backwards to the time of the patriarchs, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, and further back to the beginning of the world. There you have creation as the last and most comprehensive consequence of the revelation of Yahweh's mighty power over nature revealed at the Red Sea. 2

Theology in Outline /Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978/: p. 32). See also C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, 2d. ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), p. 162.

[1]See Bernhard Anderson, Creation Versus Chaos (New York: Association Press, 1967), p. 39.

[2]"The Biblical Doctrine of Creation," pp. 141, 142.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In this "backward journey," the Israelites expressed their faith in what they thought God did naturally; and in doing so, they were guided by theological convictions, not by historical recollections.[1]

Liberation theologians, then, who follow in this respect the conclusions of contemporary Old Testament studies, assume that liberation and creation refer to the same salvific act. Says Gutiérrez, "The creative act is linked, almost identified with, the act which freed Israel from slavery in Egypt. . . . Creation and liberation from Egypt are but one salvific act."[3] The implications and "advantages" of this approach to the

---

[1]See Anderson, Creation Versus Chaos, p. 34. Boman adds that "the Old Testament idea of creation is two things: it is a gospel and it is a doctrine. As always in the history of religion, it starts as a gospel and ends as a doctrine. Creation starts as a Gospel in Deutero-Isaiah and ends as a doctrine in Genesis 1" ("The Biblical Doctrine of Creation," p. 142).

[2]For an excellent study on this topic, see George M. Landes, "Creation and Liberation," USQR 33 (1979):79-89. The author points out that liberation and creation may very well be "the two most important themes in the entire biblical witness" (p. 79). The Psalmist capsuled these two concepts in a few words: "I will lift my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Ps 121:1).

[3]A Theology of Liberation, p. 155. This should not be construed to mean a peculiarity of liberation theology, since it is common to most modern Old Testament theology. Again, most liberation theologians assume this concept without engaging in any particular study of their own. One of the few exceptions is Severino Croatto, in his book Liberación y libertad. Pautas hermenéuticas (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Mundo Nuevo, 1973). This work will be followed in attempting to elucidate liberation theology's use of the Exodus.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Old Testament for liberation theology will become apparent as we discuss the Exodus seen as a paradigm for today's liberating efforts in Latin America.

Development of the Narrative

A view of the Exodus narratives as interpreted history is another assumption generally accepted by liberation theologians. The present text of the Exodus is seen as the result of a process of interpretation, in which the original event acquired new meaning in the light of subsequent events experienced by the Hebrews.[1] One of Croatto's "hermeneutical keys" is that

> An event is not seen as decisive in the history of a person or a people in the moment of its occurrence, but rather *after* a temporal mediation, after having "donated" its recreative energy. 2

The Hebrews understood the Exodus in the light of their unfolding history. These "hermeneutical re-readings" continued until fixed in the present text. Thus, the narrative of the Exodus "says" much more than what originally happened.

---

[1]See J. Andrews Kirk, Liberation Theology. An Evangelical View from the Third World (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 95-104, for a brief discussion on this subject. Kirk, an Anglican priest, taught New Testament in Buenos Aires for ten years. This book is a revised version of a thesis presented to London University.

[2]Croatto, Liberación y libertad, p. 29. The same thing happens, says Croatto, in the history of different people. May 25, 1810--independence day in Argentina--did not have the same significance then as it has today. The new events and memories of successive years gave that date a dimension it did not have before.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The salvific event of the Exodus should be understood today in the same way as the Hebrews did--i.e., hermeneutically, exploring its meaning in the light of our own experience. Then the Exodus acquires an "inexhaustible reserve of meaning"[1] with unlimited hermeneutical possibilities. This does not mean that faith today can be in contradiction with the archetypical revelation. "For example," writes Croatto, "the liberator God of the Exodus cannot contradict himself accepting 'oppression' in another historical juncture."[2] But Croatto regards the "archetypical revelation" as only the event to which Scripture testifies: this event makes demands on us, but the interpretation given to this event in Scripture need not bind us, since the narrative is an "interpretation" of the event.[3]

Since the present form of the Exodus narrative is the result of a long interpretative process, is it

---

[1]Ibid., p. 29. "El éxodo se convierte para nosotros--pueblos oprimidos del Tercer Mundo--en Palabra provocativa, en anuncio de liberación" (p. 32).

[2]Severino Croatto, "Dios en el acontecimiento," Revista Bíblica 24 (1973):55.

[3]Croatto, Liberación y libertad, p. 37. See also Roger Tomes, "Exodus 14: The Mighty Acts of God. An Essay in Theological Criticism," SJT 22 (1969):455:478. According to Tomes it would be fair to say that the result of critical investigation is that the exodus tradition is generally regarded as authentic memory of significant historical events. These events had to be interpreted to complete the revelation, "but the knowledge of God was always an inference from what had happened, never a matter of general timeless concepts" (p. 455).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

possible to recover an original historical nucleus, some historical "facts" that were later elaborated as Israel reflected on its own history? Liberation theologians pay little attention to the "process" that led to the present narrative, but would not deny the factuality of the event. An Exodus did take place. They seem to agree that the original history has to do with a Semitic group that migrated to Egypt at a time when other Semites, the Hyksos, were ruling there, between the eighteenth and the sixteenth centuries.[1] Eventually they were made slaves, which meant a political and social oppression practiced against a foreign ethnic minority. From this situation of bondage and oppression they cried, which indicates the beginning of their fight for freedom under the leadership of Moses, one of their own. Moses' task was made extremely difficult by the fact that the oppressed had "internalized" their oppression; hence a program of "conscientization" was indispensable, because the oppressed themselves must work out their own liberation.[2]

---

[1]See John Topel, The Way to Peace. Liberation through the Bible (Maryknoll, N. Y.,: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 2; and Kirk, Liberation Theology, pp. 96, 97.

[2]There is, in this approach, a process of "demythologization" from which the emphases on God and the supernatural tend to be removed. Even allowing for the possibility of a long process of reinterpretation, it seems unreal that the epic of a group of slaves, struggling to gain their own freedom--and gaining it at last--had entirely been lost, to the last trace in the subsequent developments.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Consistent with the acceptance of the hypothesis that the Exodus marks the beginning of Israel's history, most liberation theologians conclude that before the Exodus the Israelites were not conscious of their past history, they were not aware of their "peoplehood."[1] At the Red Sea Israel was created, *ex nihilo*, as God's people. The hopeless situation of an oppressed people was changed, unexpectedly, into a new and promising one.[2] God's intervention on behalf of Israel was due to the fact that they were oppressed, not because they were God's people or on the basis of any previous covenant. Miranda is emphatic on this:

> The exegesis which tries to make his /God's/ intervention depend completely on a promise or pact--as if God would not have intervened against injustice if he had not officially promised to do so beforehand--contradicts with this kind of positivism the deepest and most radical conviction of the Old Testament authors. For them evil is evil whether or not there have been official prohibitions; crime is crime whether or not

---

[1]This assumption has been challenged by John H. Yoder in his article, "Exodus and Exile: The Two Faces of Liberation," CrossCur 23 (1973):297-309. Yoder concludes that "peoplehood is the presupposition, not the product of Exodus" (p. 301).

[2]All that preceeds the Exodus, i.e., Genesis, are creative retrojections which arose as the hermeneutical procedure following the Exodus. It is possible that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not historical men, but rather eponyms, personifications of semi-nomadic tribes. Topel explains how Israel reinterpreted its previous life on the pattern of that historical deliverance: "The Hebrews' infidelities to God's creative love led them to conceive of the infidelities of their ancestors and even of primitive human beings, as well as of previous acts of God's deliverance" (The Way to Peace, p. 2).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

there have been covenants of promises. 1

Lessons from the Exodus

It has already been noted that at the heart of liberation theology there is a revolutionary praxis that is regarded as above judgment, a precommitment to change the world, a liberation from any type of oppression that may stand in the way of man's complete humanization. In Gutiérrez' conclusion to his book he says, "The theology of liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith *based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society.*"[2] Scripture has not played any direct role in establishing this commitment, because "the word of God is no longer a fixed absolute, an eternal proposition we receive before analyzing social conflicts *and before committing ourselves*

---

[1]Miranda, Marx and the Bible, p. 89. This is important to Miranda because of its hermeneutical consequences. If God acts solely, or primarily, out of loyalty to his own people, it would make it rather difficult to apply the idea of the Exodus to any nation today, for no nation today is God's people as Israel is said to have been at that time. On the other hand--and Miranda does not offer any explanation--if God always sides with the oppressed to deliver them, there were other oppressed people during the history of Israel that were not liberated; furthermore, in the case of the conquest, the oppressed are not the Israelites, but the Canaanites, and God does not fight for them. We must grant that when Miranda sees the Exodus as of primary importance, he is working on the established concensus of critical Protestant scholarship of the last half century.

[2]A Theology of Liberation, p. 307. Emphasis supplied.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to the transformation of historical reality."[1] Liberation theologians have set up human experiences as the basis of their theologizing; and when biblical concepts are used at all, the impression is given that they are used to support a priori commitments of the theologian, "to provide a façade for this particular political option."[2]

More than any other Biblical theme, the Exodus is seen as "a fertile Biblical theme."[3] It represents "the long march towards the promised land in which Israel can establish a society free from misery and alienation."[4] "Moses led his people out of slavery, exploitation, and alienation of Egypt so that they might inhabit a land where they could live with human dignity."[5] Consequently,

---

[1]"Statement by Hugo Assmann," in Torres, Theology in the Americas, p. 199. Italics supplied.

[2]C. René Padilla, "The Theology of Liberation," CT 18 (1973):201. An observer at the "Theology in the Americas" in Detroit noted that "the participants would defend an argument with a scriptural passage from *Jeremiah* or a verse from *Luke*, then, just as earnestly, cite Marx in condemning economic injustice" ("Jesus the Liberator?" Time /September 1, 1975/:34).

[3]A Theology of Liberation, p. 155. In general, the Old Testament is preferred over the New. The "Index of Biblical references" in this book indicates 246 quotations from the Old Testament and 178 from the New. The "Index of Scriptural References" in Miranda's Marx and the Bible devotes nine and one-half pages to Old Testament references and five and one-half to the New.

[4]Ibid., p. 157.

[5]Ibid., p. 294.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

due to similar historical experiences which people in Latin America undergo--oppression, alienated work, marginalization--the Exodus experience is paradigmatic.[1] With this in mind, we will look at some of the lessons or inspiration the Exodus can furnish to Latin America today.

History Is One

From the assumption that Exodus initiates history, liberation theologians strongly stress the idea that God acts in history, i.e., in the real world.[2] "The arena of God's action is the world, and history is the place where he presents himself."[3] Furthermore, creation and

---

[1]Ibid., p. 159. As will be seen later, the Exodus is seen as an event with only political and economic overtones; or better, the liberation theologians' precommitment to a historical liberation provides the hermeneutics with which only *those* aspects of the Exodus are brought into focus.

[2]Liberation theology finds itself within the modern theological tendency with its displacement from the Word to History. This includes the notion that Biblical revelation does not speak about what God is in Himself, but rather indirectly, through his action on our behalf, which is, at the same time, salvific. See Claude Geffré, A New Age in Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), especially chap. 4, "From the Theologies of the Word to the Theology of History," pp. 63-78.

[3]Eddie Gibbs, "The Theology of Revolution," Frontier 16 (1973):143. Not only God reveals himself in history, but he is "revealed *only* in the concrete historical context of liberation of the poor and oppressed." (Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 247). By this Gutiérrez means not the isolated poor man, but the oppressed man, "the member of a social class which is ardently struggling for its most elementary rights and striving to build a society where one can live as a man"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

liberation from Egypt are seen as one salvific act. The world and images of Isaiah 51 "refer simultaneously to two events: creation and liberation from Egypt."[1] This leads to the conclusion--fundamental in liberation theology--that there is only one history; no distinction is allowed between sacred history and secular history. Gutiérrez is very specific on this point: "There are no two histories, one profane and one sacred, 'juxtaposed' or 'closely linked.' Rather there is only one human destiny irreversibly assumed by Christ, the Lord of history."[2] The history of salvation is the very heart of human history. All history is salvific history. In other words, there is not first a good creation (Gen 1:31), then a fall followed by a history of redemption, with the purpose of restoring creation to its original goodness.

("The Praxis of Liberation," p. 386). See also Severino Croatto, "Dios en el acontecimiento," RevBib 35 (1973): 52-60.

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 155. Rahab not only symbolizes Egypt in Isa 30:7; it likewise symbolizes the chaos Yahweh had to overcome to create the world. For a contrary view, i.e., that creation of the cosmos by God was *not* a liberating act--as it was in other ancient cosmologies--see Landes, "Creation and Liberation," especially pp. 80, 81, and Gerhard F. Hasel's excellent essay, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," EvQ 46 (1974):81-102.

[2]A Theology of Liberation, p. 153. Míguez Bonino rightly observes that the elimination of all and every dualism is the clue to liberation theology. Doing Theology, p. 10. See also Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Faith and Freedom: Solidarity with the Alienated and Confidence in the Future" Horiz 2 (1975):50.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Creation, for liberation theologians, marks the beginning of the redemptive process, and man participates in it by what he does in history. Gutiérrez strongly rejects the notion of the *distinction of planes*, whereby it is said that the Church ought to work on the spiritual plane and leave the temporal plane to others.[1]

This strong emphasis on the unity of history represents in a sense a protest against traditional conceptions in theology, according to which the history of the world, with its political structures and economic and social dispositions was seen as irrelevant to redemption, since the saving intervention of God affected only a narrow strand of history, namely the history of the Jews before Christ, and the affairs of the Christian Church afterwards. For liberation theology the only meaning possible for "salvation history" is that which equates it, not with the common notion of history of salvation seen as a particular strand of history, but with the salvation of history, i.e., the subverting, by the Gospel, of all those structures which are obstacles to the full human and spiritual development of man.[2]

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 55-58.

[2]For Francisco Vanderhoff, "The unity of human history is a basic theme in Latin American theology . . . it regards human history as the only history there is; everything in it is part of the history of salvation, and the latter is not to be reduced to the history of Israel or of the Church: (Quoted in Kloppenburg, The People's Church, p. 101). See Choan-Sing Song, "Liberation of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This monistic conception of history has as its center the political liberation of the Latin American continent. The poor and the oppressed, like the Israelites of old, can be liberators; they can create their own history. The historic actions of the poor are "salvific actions."[1] The process of world history, which is seen as moving toward the liberation of mankind, constitutes God's redemptive history. While it is true that God reveals himself in history, and, consequently all authentic history is revelation, nevertheless, this type of revelation is *general*, and is not an object of theology unless it is kept "in constant reverence to the peculiar revelation of God in Christ."[2]

Even a liberation theologian such as Scannone can express his awareness that the theme of one history,

---

People in History," SEAsiaJTh 19:2 (1978):14-25, and Galilea, "The Theology of Liberation," pp. 344, 345.

[1]See Kloppenburg, The People's Church, pp. 100, 101. This concept of a single history, the result of the identification of creation and salvation, makes possible the introduction of Marxism, because the essential requirement for participation in "salvation history" is no longer centered on Christ, but on active commitment and participation in human liberation. Even a faithless ideology which claims to accomplish economic liberation can be seen as offering a welcome contribution to the history of redemption.

[2]Carlos Bravo, "Notas marginales a la teología de la liberación," EXav 1 (1974):25. This conception of history not only attributes to man the supernatural activity of God, but also fails to come to grips with the biblical concept of a temporal, spiritual dualism in which the supernatural forces of evil play a sinister and important part. See C. Peter Wagner, Latin American Theology, p. 42.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the unifying relationship between profane history and the history of salvation, "has not yet been thoroughly worked out from the new viewpoint."[1] He points to the danger present in some currents of liberation theology which derive their orientation from the Hegelian influence received through Marxism. The specific danger is seen in that the specific Christian content of one history is conceived in such a way that the Christian element is absorved by the secular.[2]

Salvation Is Universal

Gutiérrez opens chapter nine of his book, entitled "Liberation and Salvation," with a basic question: "What is the meaning of the struggle against an unjust society and the creation of a new man in the light of the word?"[3] And he hastens to add that the answer to this question presupposes an attempt to define what is meant by salvation, a task largely neglected by the

---

[1]Juan Carlos Scannone, "The Theology of Liberation--Evangelic or Ideological?" Concilium 3 (March 1974):150.

[2]A clear example of this "absorption" can be seen in the final document of the conference, "Christians for Socialism," where history is seen primarily from a secular standpoint and follows the lines of Marxist method in the understanding of the Latin American process. See "Final Document of the Convention," in Eagleson, Christians and Socialism, pp. 160-175. The strong emphasis on "history with its underlying unity" (p. 162) left no room for the presence of any Christian element.

[3]A Theology of Liberation, p. 149.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Church, thus distorting the concept of salvation.[1] He points out that in recent theology a shift has taken place from the *quantitative* to the *qualitative* aspects of salvation.[2] Concern for individual salvation is referred to as a preoccupation with quantity, whereas the real object of God's salvation has to do with quality, with the value of human existence. In the former, the preoccupation is the problem of the number of persons saved, the possibility of being saved, and the role which the Church plays in this process. Salvation has to do with life beyond this one--defining this life as merely a test to evaluate the person's suitability for a transcendent life. In the latter, the concept of salvation appears differently from what it did before; it is not something otherworldly, to which the present life is only a test, for "salvation is an intrahistorical reality . . . the communion of man with God and the communion of men among themselves."[3] This does not mean

---

[1]The word *salvation* itself has been saddled with evasive connotations, to the point of rendering it inadequate to express the reality of the Biblical message. It is for this reason that the word *liberation* is preferred. It implies an emphasis on a this-worldly, political salvation, vis-à-vis the limited, pie in the sky concept often connoted by the word *salvation*. Liberation expresses better "the struggle to construct a just and fraternal society, where people can live with dignity and be the agents of their own destiny" (ibid., p. x).

[2]Ibid., pp. 150-152.

[3]Ibid., p. 152. He explains further, "the theology of liberation is a theology of salvation in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that Gutiérrez denies the reality of an otherworldly salvation, but clearly he does not deal with that aspect.[1]

Earlier in his book, Gutiérrez distinguishes three levels of liberation: political, historical, and spiritual.[2] The substitution of the qualitative dimension of salvation for the quantitative which is also "based on the historical and liberating experience

---

concrete, historical and political conditions of today's world" ("The Praxis of Liberation," p. 393).

[1]Orlando Costas, however, an evangelical sympathetic to liberation theology, believes that substitution of the qualitative dimension for the quantitative one leads Gutiérrez not only to a universalistic concept of salvation, but also "to the elimination of the otherwordly character of salvation (The Church and its Mission, pp. 232, 233): it is elimination in the sense that nowhere does Gutiérrez address this aspect, but not necessarily in the sense that he denies it, pp. 397, 398.

[2]A Theology of Liberation, pp. 36, 37. At the first level, liberation expresses the aspirations of the oppressed peoples and social classes for social, economic, and political liberation. The second level goes beyond the overcoming of social, economic, and political dependence; the aim is the creation of a new man. "The goal is not only better living conditions, a radical change in structures, a social revolution; it is much more: the continuous creation, never ending, of a new way to be a man, a *permanent cultural revolution*" (p. 32). The third level raises the theological aspect of liberation. The creation of a new man, in a qualitatively transformed society, speaks of liberation from sin "which is the ultimate root of all disruption of friendship and of all injustice and oppression. Christ makes man truly free, that is to say, he enables man to live in communion with him; and this is the basis of all human brotherhood" (p. 37).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of the Exodus,"[1] leads Gutiérrez to the affirmation of a universalistic concept of salvation. He states:

> This qualitative, intensive approach has undoubtedly been influenced by the factor which marked the last push toward the unequivocal assertion of the universality of salvation, that is, the appearance of atheism, especially in the heart of Christian countries. The non-believer is not interested in an otherworldly salvation, as are believers in other religions; rather he considers it an evasion of the only question he wishes to deal with: the value of earthly existence. *The qualitative approach to the notion of salvation attempts to respond to this problem.* 2

The narrow, individualistic viewpoint of salvation is transcended, and "all men are called to meet the Lord insofar as they constitute a community."[3] By universal salvation Gutiérrez means more than simply asserting the possibility of reaching it while outside the visible frontiers of the Church; "man is saved if he opens himself to God and to others, even if he is not clearly aware of doing so. This is valid for Christians and non-Christians alike--for all people."[4]

---

[1]Ibid., p. 153.

[2]Ibid., p. 152. As already noted, at Vatican II attention was focused more definitively on historical concerns. The term supernatural is scarcely used by Vatican II. It is not used in *Gaudium et Spes*. The term preferred is *integral* "which tends to stress the unity of the call to salvation (Ibid., P. 72). Karl Rahner has observed that after Vatican II "not even the profession of atheism need mean perdition" (TD 29 /1980/:224).

[3]Ibid., p. 71.

[4]Ibid., p. 151. A person might reject union with God if he turns away from building up this world, if he does not open himself to others, if he withdraws into himself. Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gutiérrez deals with Rahner's concept of an "anonymous Christianity,"[1] but believes the choice of words does not do justice to the concept which he wants to express. It becomes necessary to refine these terms so they will point with greater precision to a reality which is indisputable: "that all men are efficaciously called to communion with God."[2] He tries to strengthen this conclusion --that *all* men are saved--by leaning on another premise: that "mankind, every individual, is the temple of God; every man is."[3] This important assertion is "proved" by the episode of Cornelius, and by quoting Congar ("many constitute the temple, but invisibly") and Augustine ("many seem to be within who are in reality without and others seem to be without who are in reality within").[4]

---

[1]Ibid., p. 71. According to Rahner, "implicit Christianity--it could also be termed 'anonymous Christianity'--is what we call the condition of a man who lives on the one hand in a state of grace and justification, and yet on the other hand has not come into contact with the explicit preaching of the gospel and is consequently not in a position to call himself a 'Christian'" (Karl Rahner, "Atheism and Implicit Christianity," Theological Investigations, vol. 9 /London: Daron, Longman and Todd, 1972/, p. 145. For a fuller discussion see his "Anonymous Christians," Theological Investigations, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Halicon Press, and London: Daron Longman and Todd, 1969), pp. 390-398, and "Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary Task of the Church," Theological Investigations, vol. 12 (London: Daron, Longman and Todd, 1974), pp. 161-178.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 193. See pp. 190-194 for a fuller discussion on this topic.

[4]Ibid. Interestingly, without much further explanation, he shifts from "many" to "all." On this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This section ends with the statement, "since God has become man, humanity, every man, history, is the living temple of God. The 'pro-fane,' that which is located outside the temple, no longer exists."[1] The following section, entitled "Conversion to the Neighbor," begins with the affirmation, "the modes of God's presence determine the forms of our encounter with him. If humanity, each man, is the living temple of God, we meet God in our encounter with men."[2]

Is there any difference at all between the Christian and the non-Christian? Segundo clearly says that

---

point, like on the others, Juan Gutiérrez González' criticism in The New Liberation Gospel. Pitfalls of the Theology of Liberation (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), though often exaggerated, seems not entirely without foundation. He observes that often the "author he /Gustavo Gutiérrez/ adduces as an authority tends to think rather the opposite of what Gutiérrez uses him to show" (p. 12). See pp. 11-17 for other examples. It would seem unwarranted even to suggest that Augustine, for example, would support this view, when he in fact held that the world was dark, only dimly illuminated by God's grace, and that it identified the saved with the Christians in the Church--the rest formed the *massa damnata*.

[1]Ibid., p. 194. When he says that "each man is the living temple of God," are the oppressors included also? those who are responsible for the 'sinful' conditions under which millions groan? How can we say today that "the profane no longer exists? Reality--Auschwitz, Cambodia--and the biblical witness "do not yoke yourselves in a mismatch with unbelievers. After all, what do righteousness and lawnessless have in common, or what fellowship can light have with darkness" (2 Cor 6:14) make this assertion difficult to accept. See Kloppenburg, The People's Church, pp. 100-105.

[2]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the only difference is that the Christian knows through faith in Christ what all others know fragmentarily through grace, namely, that liberation is founded on self-giving through love.

> The journey is common to all men, who are turned in the right direction by a law that God has placed in their hearts. The only thing is that some people on this road, through God's revelation, know something that relates to all; they know the mystery of the journey. And what they know, they know in order to make a contribution to the common quest. 1

There is within the general history of salvation a particular history--Israel and the Church--which serves a diaconate function due to the fact that they "know" more.[2] Now that the mere "salvationist" meaning of salvation has been surpassed and its universality affirmed, the mission of the Church has been radically changed: "The Church orients itself toward a new and radical service to mankind."[3]

Gutiérrez affirms, regarding the mission of the Church:

---

[1]Juan Luis Segundo, A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity, quoted by David R. Peel, "Juan Luis Segundo, 'A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity': A Latin American Contribution to Contemporary Theological Understanding," PerkinsJ 30 (Spring 1977):4, 5.

[2]See Assmann, Opresión-Liberación, pp. 150-152. Assmann argues that the 600,000-year or more of the history of "homo sapiens" belongs to the general history of salvation. "Pueblo de Dios, en primer lugar, es la humanidad entera" (p. 151). But this does not eliminate the importance of the reference to Israel-Church as God's people. Their "election" was a special vocation to a greater service in the world and for the world.

[3]Ibid., p. 74.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> In Latin America to be Church today means to take a clear position regarding both the present state of social injustice and the revolutionary process which is attempting to abolish that injustice and to build a more human order. 1

Affirming the view that salvation is universal, Gutiérrez--and liberation theologians in general--can concentrate exclusively on the intrahistorical aspects of salvation. No attention is given to the New Testament teaching that while salvation is meant for *all*, each person must individually appropriate it in order for salvation to become effective for him, otherwise he remains in sin.[2] Since salvation is defined only in terms of building a new society, free from oppression and poverty, the concept of conversion is restricted to a commitment to transform human reality.

To be converted is to commit oneself to the process

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 265. See pp. 101-131 and 255-285 for a detailed discussion on "the Church in the Process of Liberation" and "The Church: Sacrament of History," respectively. He affirms that just as Pius XII said that the Church civilized by evangelizing, "in the contemporary Latin American context it would be necessary to say that the Church should politicize by evangelizing" (p. 269).

[2] As Kato puts it: "The Incarnation has made all men savable, but a person is saved only when he puts his trust in the incarnate Christ who died and rose again in order to reconcile men to God (1 Cor 15:3-4). "An Evaluation of Black Theology," p. 250. In the words of the Gospel of John, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life: but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). For an excellent summary of the concept of universalism, see G. C. Berkower, The Return of Christ (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 387-423.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> of the liberation of the poor and oppressed, to commit oneself lucidly, realistically and concretely. It means to commit oneself not only generously, but also with an analysis of the situation and a strategy for action. 1

A Political Act

The liberating experience of the Exodus is constantly mentioned by liberation theologians as a model for the liberation of Latin America, which finds itself "oppressed and enslaved" like the Israelites. In harmony with the hermeneutics employed,[2] the Exodus is seen as a political liberation of the oppressed. It yields many parallels that find an easy correspondence with the situation in which the world lives today.

The words, "I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land,"[3] for instance, are seen as depicting with clarity the nature of the ancient liberation. Gutiérrez very pointedly says that

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 205.

[2]There are presently two major tendencies in reading the Exodus: one, common among evangelicals, takes it mainly as an example of redemption from sin; the political aspect of liberation is not denied, but the religious is emphasized. The other, more critical, uses the Exodus as an inspiration and paradigm for a political liberation; it emphasizes its temporal, secular character and refuses to spiritualize it. See J. Marvin Breneman O., "El Éxodo como tema de interpretación teológica," en J. Mervin Breneman O., ed., Liberación, Éxodo y Biblia. El concepto bíblico de liberación (Miami: Editorial Caribe, 1975), pp. 29-32.

[3]Exod 3:8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The liberation of Israel is a political action. It is the breaking away from a situation of despoliation and misery and the beginning of the construction of a just and fraternal society. It is the suppression of disorder and the creation of a new order. 1

Galilea underlines that "Latin American liberation theology has restored the Exodus to its political symbolism and has seen in Moses an authentic politician, guiding the people towards a better society."[2] God liberated the Jewish people politically in order to make them a holy nation. In the Exodus event God first helped Israel to be politically free before making his covenant of friendship with them. In fact, the covenant and the liberation from Egypt are different aspects of the same movement.[3] The Exodus meant liberation from slavery, and the covenant was intended to constantly remind the Israelites that they should never become oppressors themselves.

When the Exodus as a liberating model is

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 155. He adds that "with the Exodus a new age has struck for humanity: redemption from misery" (p. 158). It should be noted that at one point (p. 157) Gutiérrez recognizes that the Exodus was an act indissolubly political and religious; but then, without further explanation, continues to underline the primacy of the political. See also Alves, Opresión-Liberación, pp. 71-73.

[2] Segundo Galilea, "Liberation as an Encounter with Politics and Contemplation," Conc 6 (June 1974):31. He adds in a footnote: "on this point the consensus of authors is remarkable" (ibid.).

[3] Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 157.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transposed to the Latin American situation, it speaks, first of all, of political liberation, the overthrow of oppressors and of all structures that keep men in bondage. But liberation is not necessarily limited to the political; "the liberation of Christ cannot be equated with political liberation, but it takes place in historical and political acts of liberation."[1] Gutiérrez does not equate "the Kingdom of God and the building up of the world,"[2] but comes very close to it. Most liberation theologians would agree, I believe, with Erdozain when he says,

> If the Kingdom of God is not to be identified purely and simply with the evolution of this world, one must still not place it beyond this world, and outside the realm of history. This Kingdom has an intimate relationship with the present world. It is not indifferent as to whether men have made a politically sound go of things. It is with material of this world that the Kingdom of God is built. 3

While it is true that traditional Christianity has consistently spiritualized the Old Testament promises,

---

[1]Gutiérrez, "Faith and Freedom," p. 49.

[2]A Theology of Liberation, p. 45.

[3]Luis Erdozain, "The Evolution of Catechetics. A Study of Six International Study Week Catechetics," LumVit 25 (1970):30. We should remember that *Gaudium et Spes* insisted in a clear differentiation of the two. For instance, "earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom" (Art. 39). See the section, "Man's Activity Throughout the World," Art. 33-39. For Gutiérrez' discussion on "Temporal Progress and the Growth of the Kingdom," see A Theology of Liberation, pp. 168-178.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gutiérrez affirms that their clear political and material context must be retained.[1] Besides, the political nature of the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt should be retained as a temporal historical reality, a reality that has meaning for Latin America today in the political release of the working class who is oppressed by the capitalistic oppressor. The Exodus becomes "a kind of inspirational paradigm that informs and inspires our own struggle."[2]

God Is on the Side of the Poor

There is a new awareness of poverty in the world today to which the Church needs to adjust itself while it fulfills its mission of preaching the Gospel.[3] This awareness is based on the "discovery" that poverty in one part of the world is directly related to affluence in other parts. As Goulet expressed it, "buried deep in the consciousness of the Third World masses is the

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 166.

[2] Armerding, "Exodus: The Old Testament Foundation of Liberation," p. 58.

[3] The Church's situation today is in open contrast to the primitive church. In the New Testament, the Gospel advanced from the poor, underdeveloped part of the world to the metropolis of the empire. Today it moves in the opposite direction: from the First World to the Third. See Samuel Escobar and John Driver, Christian Mission and Social Justice (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1978), pp. 36-56, and J. Verkuyl, Contemporary Missiology. An Introduction (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 341-372.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

conviction that poverty is the by-product of wealth, the fruit of exploitation and injustice."[1] Poverty is no longer seen as fatalism,[2] but as a direct result of injustice and oppression. And since this is the case the poor must be "preferentially" addressed by the Gospel.[3]

At this point also, the Exodus, as a revelatory event, discloses that God is the God of the oppressed, involved in their history, liberating them from bondage.

---

[1]Denis Goulet, "The World of Underdevelopment: A Crisis in Values," CC 91 (1974):453. As previously noted, this awareness includes the conviction that there is no desire on the part of the wealthy nations to help the poor nations because this would endanger their own wealth and undermine their power.

[2]"Poverty is not caused by fate . . ." (A Theology of Liberation, p. 292); see also, p. 289. Gutiérrez adds, "Social classes, nations, and entire continents are becoming aware of their poverty, and when they see its root causes, they rebel against it" (p. 189). See also his recent article, "Where Hunger Is," p. 5.

[3]In a radio address one month prior to the opening of Vatican II, Pope John XXIII put this issue in a new perspective when he said: "In dealing with the underdeveloped countries, the Church presents herself as she is and as she wants to be--a Church for all men *and especially the Church of the poor*," TPS 8 (1962):396. Italics supplied. The final results of the council, in this respect, did not correspond to the expectations of many leaders in the Third World. Gutiérrez remarks that it remained the responsibility of the Church "on a continent of misery and injustice to give the theme of poverty its proper importance" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 288). He makes specific reference to CELAM II. See "Poverty and the Church," Medellín, Conclusions, pp. 187-195. The Puebla document indicates a definite sharpening of this concept. See the section, "A Preferential Option for the Poor," Arts. 1134-1165 of the "Final Document."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"He is the God who liberates slaves (Exodus), who causes empires to fall and raises up the oppressed."[1] The Exodus story declares that God takes sides. The Israelites were being oppressed by the Egyptians. Complaints brought added burdens rather than relief,[2] but God heard the groaning of the people, remembered the covenant made with their parents,[3] and took their side, intervening to liberate them from the degradation of slavery.[4]

Gutiérrez devotes more than twenty pages of his book to a discussion of the meaning of poverty[5] and finds

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 116. The influence of Moltmann's thought is evident here. The German theologian had written, "He /God/ is the God of the poor, the oppressed and the humiliated" (Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God. The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology /London: SCM Press, 1974/, p. 329). See the entire chapter, "Ways Toward the Political Liberation of Mankind," pp. 317-338.

[2]Exod 1:8-14.

[3]Exod 2:23-25; 6:1-5. We noticed earlier that this element, God acting because of a covenant previously made with the patriarchs, is not taken at face value by liberation theologians. The importance of this concept will be discussed later.

[4]This is especially seen in the succession of plagues (Exod 7-11) and in the final destruction of Pharaoh and his army (Exod 14). According to liberation theologians--especially expounded by Croatto--in the development of the Exodus narrative, later redactions developed the idea that the strategy of the flight was Yahweh's. To the Hebrew mind, unfamiliar with the western concept of laws of nature, even natural phenomena that worked on their behalf were seen as the special intervention of God. See Topel, The Way to Peace, pp. 158, 159.

[5]See especially A Theology of Liberation, pp. 158, 159.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the term a very ambiguous one, in need of clarification. Often Christians have a tendency to give to "material poverty" a positive value; it is seen as austerity and indifference to the things of this world and as pre-condition for a life in conformity with the Gospel. Gutiérrez refuses to accept this interpretation, for it would mean that "the demands of Christianity are at cross purposes to the great aspiration of people today, who want to free themselves from subjection to nature, to eliminate the exploitation of some people by others, and to create prosperity for everyone."[1]

> Material poverty, then, means a subhuman situation, to be poor means to die of hunger, to be illiterate, to be exploited by others, not to know that you are being exploited, not to know that you are a person. 2

The notion of spiritual poverty also needs clarification. It is often seen simply as an interior attitude of unattachment to things of this world--not necessarily abundance or lack of things. Gutiérrez argues that this conception is partial and insufficient. "Spiritual poverty is something more complete and profound. It is above all total availability to the Lord."[3] Poverty,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 289. It would seem that Gutiérrez' assessment of "the great aspirations of people today" as a desire "to create prosperity for everyone" is more idealistic than real. Can it be said these things are the aspirations of people in general?

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 299. He lays aside the traditional

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

then, is an act of love and liberation. Christian poverty has meaning only as a commitment of solidarity with the poor, with those who suffer misery and injustice. "Christian poverty, an expression of love, is solidarity *with the poor* and is a protest *against poverty*."[1]

Poverty must be repudiated, first of all, because it contradicts the very meaning of the Mosaic religion. "Moses led his people out of the slavery, exploitation, and alienation of Egypt so that they might inhabit a land where they could live with human dignity."[2] At this particular point, it is evident that Gutiérrez, and liberation theologians in general, have gone beyond the social encyclicals' classification of the world into developed and underdeveloped, rich and poor to the adoption of Marxist categories of oppressors and oppressed. He says very pointedly that there is one characteristic in particular that holds a central place in this new understanding of reality: "the division of humanity into oppressors and oppressed, into owners of the means of

---

meaning of material and opts for a third meaning of the term: "poverty as a commitment of solidarity and protest" (p. 299).

[1]Ibid., pp. 300, 301. Poverty has redemptive value when it becomes an authentic imitation of Christ; it is a poverty which means taking on the sinful condition of man to liberate him from sin and all its consequences. See Gutiérrez, "The Praxis of Liberation," p. 384.

[2]Ibid., p. 294. He also argues that poverty goes against the mandate of Genesis 1:26 and 2:15. Likewise, because man is created in the image and likeness of God, and is, therefore, the sacrament of God, "we meet

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

production and those dispossessed of the fruit of their work, into antagonistic social classes."[1]

Class Struggle

Another salient feature of the Exodus story is that God not only took sides *with* the oppressed but *against* the oppressors; he did not remain aloof from a situation of human misery and abuse. "The Bible, especially the Exodus and the prophets, is the revelation of the transcendent God, the liberator of the oppressed who fights against the oppressors in their behalf."[2] The course of action for the committed Christian is thus clearly indicated. According to Gutiérrez, "to be with the oppressed is to be against the oppressor."[3] He further states that "the class struggle is a fact, and neutrality in this matter is impossible."[4] He admits,

---

God in our encounter with men; what is done for others is done for the Lord" (ibid.).

[1]Ibid., p. 273. See also Eagleson, Christians and Socialism, pp. 164-169.

[2]Miranda, Marx and the Bible, p. vii. Karl Barth once said, "God in no wise takes up a neutral position between the poor and the rich man. The rich man may take care of his own future. God is on the side of the poor" (Quoted by William Wipfler, "How We Keep People Poor," The Witness /April 1977/:8, 9.

[3]A Theology of Liberation, p. 301.

[4]Ibid., p. 273. *Not* to take sides is in fact a decision to side with those in power, which means siding with the oppressor against the oppressed. "When the Church rejects the class struggle, it is objectively operating as a part of the prevailing system" (p. 275).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

however, that "the class struggle poses problems to the universality of love and the unity of the Church,"[1] but "to build a just society necessarily implies the active participation in the class struggle that is occurring before our eyes."[2] And since accepting class struggle --which is unavoidable--means to decide for some people against others, how does one resolve the difficulty that class struggle represents for the universality of Christian love and the unity of the Church?

Gutiérrez grants that one must love his enemies, the oppressors. This means liberating them from their inhuman condition as oppressors, from themselves, which can only be achieved by resolutely opting for the oppressed, that is, by combatting the oppressive class. Giulio Girardi--whom Gutiérrez and other Latin American theologians often quote--summarizes well this approach:

> Undoubtedly the gospel commands us to love the enemy, but it does not say that we should not have enemies or that we must not combat them. It could not say it; we could not love them concretely without having them. By commanding us to abandon neutrality, the gospel forces us to create enemies and to combat them. . . . The Christian must love everybody, but not all in the same way: we love the oppressed, defending and liberating him; the oppressor, accusing and combating him. Love compels us to fight for the liberation of all those who live under a condition

---

See Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, chap. 6, "Love, Reconciliation and Class Struggle," pp. 106-131.

[1] Ibid., p. 273.

[2] Ibid., p. 274.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> of objective sin. The liberation of the rich and the liberation of the poor are realized at the same time. In this way, paradoxically, class struggle not only does not contradict the universality of love but becomes demanded by it. 1

The Biblical injunction, "love your enemies," in the context of class struggle today, presupposes recognizing and accepting the fact that one has class enemies and that it is necessary to combat them. "It is not a question of having no enemies, but rather of not excluding them from our love."[2] But to love all men "does not mean avoiding confrontations; it does not mean preserving a fictitious harmony."[3] On the contrary, "love is not

---

[1]Quoted by Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 122. For Girardi's exposition of this concept, see his Amour chrétien et violence révolutionnaire (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1970), especially chap. 4, "Amour et lutte des classes," and chap. 5, "Amour et violence révolutionnaire." For Gutiérrez' reference to Girardi's thought, see A Theology of Liberation, pp. 276, 285.

[2]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 276. He adds that there "must be a real and effective combat, not hate" (ibid.). One would raise the question as to whether class struggle without hatred is actually possible. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, an idol of the Latin American revolutionaries, once wrote, "Hatred as a factor in struggle; instransigent hatred of the enemy, which drives a man beyond his natural limitations and begets effective violence, turning the man into a selective, cold machine killing. That is what our soldiers must be like; a people that does not hate cannot triumph over a brutal enemy" (Quoted by Kloppenburg, The People's Church, p. 179). Míguez Bonino, himself convinced that class struggle is a fact, and that violence is unavoidable, admits that they create "a number of very serious problems: the exacerbation of hate, resentment, and rivalries . . ." (Doing Theology, p. 127).

[3]Ibid., p. 275. "The Word of the Lord, the message of love, is a liberating force which attacks the roots of all injustice" (ibid., p. 106).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

authentic if it does not take the path of class solidarity and social struggle."[1] Christians must be committed, both personally and collectively, to the building of a new society by eliminating the causes of injustice and struggle, i.e., the present system. The purpose of the class struggle is "to build a socialist society, more just, free, and human, and not a society of superficial and false reconciliation and equality."[2] In the final analysis, even though Gutiérrez does not say it in so many words, all those who are not poor, or who do not consciously opt in favor of the poor and against the rich, are simply "oppressors," enemies who must be fought against. Raúl Vidales clearly spelled out this conclusion when he said, "We now clearly realize that to leave the Gospel above the class struggle is to reduce it to an ideology that in the last analysis legitimizes the established order."[3] It becomes clear, therefore, that "only a break with the unjust order and frank commitment to a new society can make the message of love which the

---

[1]Ibid., p. 276.

[2]Ibid., p. 274. It would seem that the reconciliation Gutiérrez talks about is reconciliation among "radicals," and does not square with what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). There is room here for each one to affirm its own particularity without calling for the abolition of any group.

[3]Raúl Vidales, "Evangelización y liberación popular," in Ruiz Maldonado, Liberación y cautiverio, p. 220.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Christian community bears credible to Latin America."[1] In an extended analysis of Gutiérrez' thought, Richard Neuhaus[2] concludes that "Gutiérrez' vision is not that of the Church renewed but simply that of the Church switching sides"[3] and that Gutiérrez "finally equates the Church's mission with the revolutionary struggle."[4]

When the affirmation is made that the only alternative for the Christian is to opt for the oppressed, which means an active struggle against the oppressors, have all the factors involved been carefully considered? Can we be justified, for instance, in dividing the rich and the poor into opposing classes? Could there be

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 138.

[2]Richard J. Neuhaus, "Liberation Theology and the Captivities of Jesus," Worldview 16 (June 1973):41-48.

[3]Ibid., p. 48.

[4]Ibid., p. 45. In a book entitled El evangelio de Judas (Santiago: Pineda Libros, 1973), clearly directed against Christians for Socialism, the Chilean Guillermo Blanco argues that Christ's command, "Love one another," has turned into "Hate one another" by the new Gospel. With visible sarcasm he ridicules their stance:

> ¡Adelante!
> Id y enseñad a usar la metralleta.
> Resistid al mal, abofetead al raca en ambas mejillas.
> Si perdonáis a otros sus faltas, estaréis demorando
> el proceso histórico.
> Orad por vuestros enemigos una vez que los hayáis,
> cabalmente, asesinado.
> Toma tu fusil y sígueme.
> Cristo fue un general sublime.
> Cristo fue un gran guerrillero.
> Cristo expulsó a los mercaderes.
> Christo nos llama a combatir, hermanos . . . (p. 80).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Christians on both sides? Could it be hoped that real unity could emerge from the deepening of the division? Could not violent struggle bring at the end more harm than good?[1] It would seem that more attention should also be paid to the finality of the witness of Scripture, including the New Testament, and, particularly, the life of Christ and its normativeness. Doesn't the strategy of the cross place the Christian at odds both with the oppressors and the oppressed who adopt the oppressors' tactics to overcome them?[2]

Violence

Closely related to the concept of class struggle

---

[1]Bernard Ramm points out that those who have written on the subject of revolution with patience, reflection, and historical perspective are very cautious about indicating the possible losses as well as the anticipated gains of a revolution. "For example," he writes, "if the revolution fails, the oppression may be measurably increased. Or, if the revolutionary force is not strong enough, instead of revolution there will be a terrible slaughter and rivers of blood. If the revolution succeeds, the new regime may be more wicked or oppressive than the older regime. The revolution may solve one set of problems only to create another" ("Ethics in the Theologies of Hope," in David F. Wells and Clark H. Pinnock, eds., Towards a Theology of the Future /Carol Stream: Creation House, 1971/, p. 204). Even such a known advocate of non-violence as Helder Camara would say "/armed revolution/ is legitimate but impossible because it would be squashed . . . My position in this regard is not based on religious motives, but on tactical ones . . ." (Quoted in Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 126).

[2]See Stephen Knapp, "A Preliminary Dialogue with Gutiérrez' A Theology of Liberation," in Armerding, Evangelicals and Liberation, p. 39.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is that of violence.[1] Violence is very much a reality in the Exodus story. The liberation from Egypt is accomplished through violent means. We see it in Moses' killing of the Egyptian,[2] in the slaughtering of the first-born,[3] and in the destruction of Pharaoh's entire army in the Red Sea.[4] "How much violence there is in the whole story!" exclaims Dussel; "And we must give this violence consideration too, because all these questions must be examined in any Latin American theology."[5]

God's option in liberating his people is seen not only as political but as violent. The Exodus was a

---

[1]For Gutiérrez' discussion of this issue, see A Theology of Liberation, pp. 89; 108-110; 265-276. Míguez Bonino argues that differing positions on violence or non-violence result from two different perspectives of man and the world. One of them--which favors non-violence--is built on the principle of the rationality of the universe; the conviction that universal order penetrates the world. Consequently, whatever tends to disturb the universal order is seen as irrational and evil. The other conceives of man as a project of liberation that constantly emerges in the fight against existing limitations in nature, history, society and religion. In this case, violence plays a creative role. See José Míguez Bonino, "Violence: A Theological Reflection," in Anderson, Mission Trends No. 3, pp. 118-126.

[2]Exod 2:12. Even if this incident is not part of the Exodus per se, its importance derives from the fact that Moses, God's chosen instrument, took the side of the oppressed and used violence against the oppressor. The story shows, however, that the taking of violent action into one's hand is not God's way.

[3]Exod 12:29, 20.

[4]Exod 14:28.

[5]Dussell, History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

revolutionary, violent breakaway from slavery. "Moses and Aaron were violent revolutionary leaders."[1] The affirmation of violence, however, is not universal among liberation theologians, that is, the belief that violence is desirable to bring about the needed changes conducive to a better society. To say without qualification that "the theology of liberation is equivalent to a theology of violence, i.e., a justification of it,"[2] would give a distorted impression of the facts. It is true that within the confines of liberation theology there are those who take an extreme position,[3] but in the mainstream liberationist thought, violence is seen as a last resort when

---

[1]Tissa Balasuriya, The Eucharist and Human Liberation (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 11.

[2]Adolfo Ham, "Introduction to the Theology of Liberation," ComVia 16 (1973):119.

[3]For some, like Rubem Alves and theologians associated with ISAL, violence is "the solution for social problems, the road that leads to a perfect society" (C. René Padilla, "Revolution and Revelation," in Brian Griffiths, ed., Is Revolution Change? /Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1972/, p. 74). Alves is unambiguous when he writes: "Love for the oppressed is wrath against the oppressor. The process of liberation is thus the judgment on the master. In order to make the slave free, the objective powers and instruments of oppression must be destroyed" (A Theology of Human Hope, p. 124). See also Orlando Fals-Borda, as quoted by Denis Goulet, A New Moral Order: Studies in Development Ethics and Liberation (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 58, where Fals-Borda defends acts like the kidnapping of foreign ambassadors and national personalities by revolutionary groups. Doubtless, Camilo Torres and Che Guevara are seen as the "incandescent symbols of countless unknown rebels . . ." (Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 239).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

changes are not possible through non-violent means.[1]

It was at Medellín that a profound change in the perspective of violence was introduced.[2] The Latin American bishops described the situation of the continent as a "situation of injustice that can be called institutionalized violence";[3] in other words, a situation in which the use of violence was morally justified in order to bring about necessary change in the existing oppressive structures.[4]

According to Gutiérrez, Medellín's perspective

---

[1]Most of them see, however, that in practice, the time is already past for accomplishing liberation by purely non-violent means. See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 126, and Severino Croatto, Liberación y libertad, pp. 60, 61.

[2]For a commentary on the Medellín text concerning institutionalized violence, see Gonzalo Arroyo, "Violencia institucionalizada en América Latina," Mensaje 17 (1968):534-544, and Pierre Bigo, "Enseñanza de la iglesia sobre la violencia," Mensaje 17 (1968):574-578.

[3]Medellín, Conclusions, "Peace," Art. 16. By institutionalized violence is mainly meant the state's denial of elementary human rights and of basic human requirements. It also includes lack of proper participation in the decision-making process that affects one's own future. See Kirk, Theology Encounters Revolution, p. 142.

[4]The Latin American bishops were willing to differ, in this respect, from the pronouncements of Pope Paul VI, who a few days earlier had pledged his support to the Church's desire for social change, but on the condition that it be by non-violent means. See TPS 13 (1968-68):240. Gutiérrez points out that as the awareness of existing legalized violence grows, the problem of counter-violence is no longer an abstract ethical concern. In fact it becomes "very important" at the level of political efficacy" (See A Theology of Liberation, p. 103.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"allows for a study of the complex problems of counter-violence."[1] It is a double standard, it is claimed to assume that violence is acceptable when the oppressor uses it to maintain "order," but is not acceptable when the oppressed use it to change this "order." Gutiérrez goes even further when he states that we should avoid by all means "equating the *unjust violence* of the oppressors (who maintain this despicable system) with the *just violence* of the oppressed (who feel obliged to use it to achieve their liberation)."[2] Violence is initiated by those who oppress; it has never been initiated by the oppressed because violence begins with a relationship of oppression.

> How could they [the oppressed] be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence? How could they be the sponsors of something whose objective inauguration called forth their existence as oppressed? There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation. 3

Because the oppressor has no intention of loosing his grip on the oppressed, violence becomes necessary to uproot the evil structures. "Revolutionary violence is necessary because there is no other way of overturning

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 108.

[2] Ibid., pp. 108, 109. See "Latin America: A Continent of Violence," in Between Honesty and Hope, pp. 81-84. Gutiérrez' is a quote from p. 84.

[3] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), p. 41.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that system."[1] When one recognizes that "the root of all violence is the misery that each year kills more people than the bloodiest wars and reduces to sub-human condition more than two-thirds of the population and of the entire world,"[2] neutrality is impossible. The changing of the existing oppressive structures in Latin America becomes a necessity; yes, a mandate of the Gospel, and any claim to noninvolvement is but a subterfuge to keep things as they are.[3] Revolutionary violence becomes necessary because there is no other way of overturning the existing order. But since violence is produced by the existing oppressive social order, the revolutionary violence--the second violence--is instrumental and aims at introducing the conditions that will eliminate violence, i.e., a classless society.[4]

---

[1]Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 125.

[2]Camara, "CELAM: History is Implacable," p. 57.

[3]The question is not, argues Gutiérrez, whether the Church should get involved in the revolutionary process in Latin America, but whether its influence will be for or against the established order, for or against a new, freer society. See A Theology of Liberation, pp. 266, 267. Míguez Bonino observes that in a continent like Latin America, where thousands die daily as victims of diverse forms of violence, non-violence is an illusion. "*My* violence is direct or indirect, institutional or insurrectional, conscious or unconscious. But it is violence; it objectively produces victims, whether I intend it subjectively or not" (Doing Theology, p. 126).

[4]The influence of Marxism behind this stance is undeniable. In the Communist Manifesto we read: "They /the Communists/ openly declare that their ends can only be attained by the forcible overthrow of all existing social

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is part of the liberationist perspective that the violence of the oppressed is *always* unjust, and that the revolutionary violence is *always* just, as we noted in Gutiérrez.[1] No sense of wrongdoing is ever associated with subversive violence. As Goulet observes, "a supreme sense of moral worth pervades the subversive enterprise in Latin America."[2] Alves writes that "man is absolved from inhumanity and brutality in the present, in the time of transition, the time which does not count."[3]

What about Jesus' attitude towards politics and violence? This question can hardly be avoided as Christians get involved in a project of transforming society,

---

conditions" (p. 62). Still, Marx presumed, on the basis of empirical investigation, that the old order would collapse without the need of external provocation and often used the symbol of "grave-digger" (p. 24) which speaks of the burial of the old. See Kirk, Theology Encounters Revolution, pp. 145-147, for a discussion of "Marxism and Violence."

[1]It is difficult to disagree with Neuhaus when he observes that "A Theology of Liberation comes close to providing carte blanche legitimization for joining almost any allegedly revolutionary struggle to replace almost any allegedly repressive regime" ("Liberation Theology and the Captivities of Jesus," p. 46). There is no attempt to provide a criteria by which to judge the justice of a revolutionary struggle, especially since no appeal is made to the "just war" concept as a guide for ethical reflection.

[2]Goulet, A New Moral Order, p. 63.

[3]Alves, Theology of Human Hope, p. 155. The present time does not count because, according to Alves, in order to destroy the repression imposed upon society, man finds it necessary to impose upon his present a similar structure of repression; thus the present loses itself.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

even by violent means, if necessary. Gutiérrez points out that Jesus had close association with the Zealots and exercised great attraction over people with strong nationalistic tendencies, who fiercely opposed Roman domination, and who ardently awaited the arrival of the Kingdom which was to end the present situation.[1] Still, his awareness of the universality of his mission did not conform with the narrow nationalism of the Zealots. "For Jesus, the liberation of the Jewish people was only one aspect of a universal permanent revolution."[2] Other authors are more specific on this subject.[3] What Nolan says is representative of what others would say.

> Jesus was not a pacifist *in principle*, he was a pacifist in practice, that is to say, in the concrete circumstances of his time. We do not know what he would have done in other possible circumstances. But we can surmise that *if* there had been no other way of defending the poor and the oppressed and *if* there had been no danger of an escalation of violence, his unlimited compassion might have overflowed temporarily into violent indignation . . . violence would be a temporary measure with no other

---

[1]See A Theology of Liberation, pp. 225-235, where Gutiérrez discusses the issue of "Jesus and the Political World."

[2]Ibid., p. 231.

[3]See, for example, Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, pp. 156, 170. After quoting the Gospels, where they state that Jesus looked at them "*with anger* (Mark 3:5); "*in this wicked and godless age . . .*" (Mark 3:38): " . . . *you hypocrites*" (Mark 7:6), as evidences of violent attitudes in Jesus, Segundo concludes: "We must accept the fact that the violence of these attitudes is a relative means and that Jesus is urging us to use the least amount of violence compatible with truly effective love" (p. 166).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

purpose than the prevention of some more serious violence. 1

Liberation Is Man's Work

Besides the universality of salvation, the redemptive character of the poor, and the justification of violence, the Exodus also teaches another lesson that we must not forget, namely "the significance of the self-generation of man in the historical, political struggle."[2] Following Von Rad, as we noticed, Gutiérrez sees in the Exodus the starting point of Israel's history. He also ties it close together to the Biblical doctrine of creation: "Creation and salvation from Egypt are but one salvific act."[3] And this fact--that the liberation from Egypt coincides with creation--"adds an

---

[1]Albert Nolan, Jesus Before Christianity (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1978), p. 111. The author is a South African Dominican, and the book is written from a liberationist perspective. Nothing is said about the cosmic salvation achieved by Christ or the role of his suffering and death. Jesus is portrayed as a liberator in a very restricted sense. The question would need to be asked whether this evaluation corresponds with the data the New Testament provides. For a different perspective, see Martin Hengel, Was Jesus a Revolutionist? (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); Victory over Violence, Jesus and the Revolutionists (Philadelphia: Fortress Press:, 1973); John H. Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), and Hans-Ruedi Weber, "Freedom Fighter or Prince of Peace?" SE 8:4 (1972):1-24.

[2]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 182. The subtitle on page 155 reads: "Political liberation: Self-creation of man," a theme that is clearly expounded in the following pages.

[3]Ibid., p. 155.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

element of capital importance: the need and the place of man's active participation in the building of society."[1] Gutiérrez concludes that "man is the crown and center of the work of creation and is called to continue it through his labor (cf. Gen 1:28)."[2] While the Exodus is for him the model of a human-centered political salvation, it is the doctrine of creation that provides him with the anthropocentric base for man's role in his liberation.[3]

Genesis portrays man as created free to rule over creation and to continue its work. God endowed him with dominion over animals and the earth. He was also created in His image.[4] Gutiérrez "puts together" the value of creation and redemption as they relate to man's responsibility by stating that faith in creation "desacralizes" creation, i.e., does away with its

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 158, 159.

[2]Ibid., p. 158. Later he adds that man is "the Lord of creation and coparticipant in his own salvation" (p. 173).

[3]See Armerding, "Exodus," p. 49.

[4]In Egypt, and other neighbouring cultures, this privilege is reserved only for the king, who *becomes* son of God at the time of his coronation. In Genesis *man* is *created* in the image of God. Croatto argues that only a very clear motivation could account for this innovation in the "ideología real" of all the Orient; only the historic experience of the Exodus provides the key at this point: it is impossible to understand what Genesis says about man without the self-understanding that Israel had of itself after the saving event of the Exodus. See Croatto, Liberación y libertad, pp. 64-67.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mythical and supernatural character, making it the area proper for the work of man. Likewise the Exodus from Egypt, the home of a sacred monarchy reinforces the view that the "desacralization" of social praxis will from that time on be the work of man.[1]

The fact that liberation is accomplished by man's efforts is seen as clearly underlined in the Exodus story. God chose men from among the oppressed people to be the agents of the people's liberation. "Sent by Yahweh, Moses began the long, hard struggle for the liberation of his people."[2]

> From the beginning of his work in liberating the Hebrews, Yahweh drew men from among the people to be their leaders: Moses, Aaron and Joshua. Thus liberation was always an interaction between Yahweh and the people themselves exercising their own initiative in pleading their case before the pharaoh, heading out into the desert, spying out the country, engaging the inhabitants in war, conquering the country. 3

The need of man's participation is constantly

---

[1]See A Theology of Liberation, p. 159. See further on this topic, Cox, The Secular City, pp. 19-26, where he develops these two ideas cited by Gutiérrez.

[2]Ibid., p. 156. Croatto argues that Moses was called because he *was* a leader, even when the text, as we have it, inverts the relation. Even the notion that he was "called," that God took the initiative needs to be explained. "El profundo sentido religioso de la cosmovisión bíblica enfatiza la iniciativa *divina* del proceso, pero eso es propio del *lenguage* religioso; no significa que históricamente haya sido así . . . algunos teólogos que interpretan literalmente el dato bíblico gustan desaprobar la autenticidad de las iniciativas 'humanas' de liberación" (Liberación y libertad, p. 42).

[3]Topel, The Way to Peace, p. 19.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emphasized by Gutiérrez and underlines the fact that if liberation is to be authentic and complete, it has to be undertaken by the oppressed people themselves. The process of liberation requires the active participation of the oppressed. "This certainly is one of the most important themes running through the writings of the Latin American Church."[1]

It seems, indeed, that in the long run everything depends on man. He appears as the true and *only* agent of his liberation. Dussel observes that "our people in Latin America must liberate themselves, or else liberation will never come."[2] Gutiérrez underlines the same argument by quoting Frantz Fanon:

> To educate the masses politically . . . means . . . to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people. 3

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 113. See also, pp. 113, 158, 173, 182.

[2] History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 146.

[3] Quoted in A Theology of Liberation, p. 182. Even an authentic theology of liberation will only be possible "when the oppressed themselves can freely and creatively express themselves in society and among the people of God, until they are the artisans of their own liberation" (Gutiérrez, "The Hope of Liberation," p. 69).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conscientization

There is yet another fundamental lesson that can be gleaned from the Exodus: "The participation of the oppressed /in their own liberation/ presupposes an awareness on their part of their unjust situation."[1] The Israelites had been subjected for so long, and under such inhuman conditions, that they became despondent and had resigned themselves to their bitter lot, to the point that when the "liberator" first appeared among them, "they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and bondage."[2] It was indispensable for Moses and Aaron to work diligently among the people, helping them to become aware of the reality of their situation, because "there is no liberation process without a previous stage of conscientization of the oppressed, the sole architect of his liberation."[3] Moses' task was to awaken in the people hatred for oppression and the realization that they could be in charge of their own destiny.

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 113. See also pp. 91-92, 113-117, 269-270 for further discussion on this topic.

[2]Exod 6:9. Croatto points out that this text "es la señalación, en letras de fuego, del colmo de la alienación del hombre, que ya ni espera siquiera en su propia liberación" (Liberación y libertad, p. 36). This text also would deny the idea that the Israelites knew about any ancient promise or of God's presence in history. See p. 37.

[3]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberacion, p. 84.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The condition of the oppressed Hebrews represents the condition of all oppressed people; and due to its background of colonialism and neo-colonialism, it is especially so in Latin America. This is why liberation, according to Gutiérrez, "means more than overcoming economic, social and political dependence."[1] For this liberation to be possible, a liberation at a deeper level becomes indispensable, namely, "an *interior* liberation . . . liberation not only on the social plane, but also on a psychological."[2]

The initial response of the Israelites to their own liberation--at first too alienated to listen to Moses--finds its echo in the unresponsiveness of the masses in Latin America. This is why, again, a thorough work of conscientization claims first priority. What does this mean, and how can it be accomplished? For the answer to this, Gutiérrez, and all liberation theologians, are indebted to Paulo Freire,[3] the Brazilian educator. He developed the concept of *conscientization*,[4] which has

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 91.

[2] Ibid., p. 30.

[3] See ibid., p. 91. Paulo Freire worked out literacy programs on behalf of the impoverished peasants of Northeast Brazil in the early 1960s. After the military coup in 1964 he was forced into exile, continuing his work in Chile. In recent years he has been working with The World Council of Churches Education Department in Geneva.

[4] *Conscientization*, from the Portuguese

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lately become very popular. Born out of a literacy program, the term obviously includes more than the technique for teaching how to read and how to write.[1]

While working on behalf of the poor and illiterate, Freire discovered some basic things and developed a "philosophy of education."[2] Central to the entire

---

conscientização, is not easy to translate and can be misleading in English. It has nothing to do with conscience. In Portuguese and Spanish *concientización* can have a meaning related to consciousness, and this is its intended meaning. It expresses the idea of "making aware," or "awakening of consciousness." Myra Bergman Ramos, translator of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, in an explanatory note, observes that "the term conscientização refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 19).

[1]Gutiérrez understands that through Freire's concept of conscientization

> "The oppressed person rejects the oppressive consciousness which dwells in him, becomes aware of his situation, and finds his new language. He becomes, by himself, less dependent and freer, as he commits himself to the transformation and building up of society" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 91).

The noted sociologist, Peter Berger, defines it as "the cognitive preparation for revolutionary action" (Pyramids of Sacrifice. Political Ethics and Social Change /New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1974/, p. 112); and according to John G. David, conscientization "is an awakening of the critical consciousness which produces an experience of social discontent" (Christians, Politics and Violent Revolution /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976/, p. 101).

[2]For a more concise presentation, see his "Education as Cultural Action," in Colonnese, Conscientization for Liberation, pp. 109-122; "Conscientization," CrossCur 14 (1974):23-31. A more complete exposition of his views can be found in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, originally published in Portuguese in 1968. For an excellent analysis of Feire's thought, see Bennie E. Goodwin, "Education as Liberation: An Analysis of Paulo Freire," JIntThC

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

program is the realization that at the root of all oppression lies the fact that the oppressed have internalized, as part of their own consciousness, an image of themselves planted in them by the oppressor: poverty is related to ignorance and laziness. This causes them to submit fatalistically and passively to the oppression.[1]

It is one of Freire's basic convictions that if the oppressed are ever to be liberated they must undertake the task themselves for the oppressor will never do it. For this to be possible, a thorough educational program, i.e., conscientization, is indispensable.[2]

---

2 (1975):88-99. See also Henrique C. de Lima Vaz, "The Church and Conscientização," America 118 (1968):578-581.

[1]See Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 48, 49. If the oppressed ever dare to look for causes, for reasons of their condition, they usually think on things higher and more powerful than man: God, or destiny. If God is responsible for an intolerable situation, man can do nothing. If God is not the cause, then it must be destiny, and what can man do but yield fatalistically to his lot. At times another excuse is found: the helplessness of the oppressed. The dominated mind looks inward and decides that it is totally unable to cope with its misery; it concludes that it is impotent. This too, is regarded by Freire as a myth spread by the dominating structure and must be overcome. Marx had already said something similar: "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class" (The Communist Manifesto, p. 37). The proletarian himself must change his way of thinking about himself, because his way of thinking, which seems natural, has been imposed on him by the ruling class (See Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, pp. 14, 15).

[2]See Freire, "Conscientization," pp. 28, 29. He is encouraged by the fact that in Latin America many Christians are vigorously reacting against the idea that since it is God's will, we must be patient and await for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Freire strongly objects to the traditional method of education, which he calls the "banking method."[1] This "banking method" must be rejected; it will never call upon students to critically consider reality. It must be replaced by what Freire calls the "problem-posing method."[2]

---

the promised heaven at the end. "The truth of the matter is that we have to earn our heaven here and now. . . . Salvation is something to achieve, not just to hope for" (29). Philosophically Freire is a humanist: see Pedagogy of the Oppressed, pp. 27-30. He nowhere affirms the existence of God or attributes to Him any active role in the world's creation or administration. For Freire, "man is the measure of all things." Denis Collins in his book, Paulo Freire: His Life, Work, and Thoughts (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), identifies five philosophical strains that, combined with his own classical humanism, shape Freire's thought: personalism, existentialism, phenomenology, Marxism, and Christianity.

[1]See Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, pp. 57-66. The aim of this method , he holds, is to store in the student's mind the right kind of information, which will then be available for him to retrieve, as from an account, whenever he needs it. This education he regards as establishment-oriented and designed to maintain the status quo. The teacher is the subject in this process, and the student is transformed into a receiving object. The "banking method" stimulates the credulity of the student, with the ideological intent, not necessarily perceived by the teacher, of indoctrinating him to adapt to the world of oppression. See ibid., p. 65. Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who "know" upon those who they consider to know nothing (p. 59).

[2]This method is designed to raise the consciousness of the oppressed by forcing them to think for themselves and find answers to their own problems. It seeks to stimulate their creative thinking so that they will be enabled, not merely to adapt to the world as it is, but to change it. Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not in transferrals of information. "Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality" (p. 68). In pp. 57-74, Freire discusses and contrasts these two methods of education.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gutiérrez--who works on the same assumption as Freire--e.g., that there are two classes of people: oppressed and oppressor--finds the concept of conscientization very useful and makes it almost equivalent with the mission of the Church.[1] "The primary task of the Church . . . is to celebrate with joy the salvific action of the Lord in history,"[2] which, in the framework of Latin America, means the "prophetic *denunciation* of every dehumanizing situation which is contrary to brotherhood, justice, and liberty."[3] People who hear the message and live in oppression, by the mere fact of hearing it should perceive themselves as oppressed and feel impelled to seek their own liberation.

> The anunciation of the Gospel thus has a conscientizing function, or in other words, a politizing function. But this is made real and meaningful only by living and announcing the Gospel from within a commitment to liberation, only in concrete, effective solidarity with people and exploited social classes.4

And these terms--"to politicize," "to conscienticize"--carry with them a "deeply subversive meaning" in Latin America.

---

[1]See A Theology of Liberation, pp. 265-272.

[2]Ibid., p. 265.

[3]Ibid., p. 267.

[4]Ibid., p. 269. He calls attention to what Pius XII, then Cardinal Pacelli, said: that the Church civilizes by evangelizing. He goes on to say that in contemporary Latin American context it becomes necessary to say that the Church should politicize by evangelizing.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The concept of conscientization, then, in Freire as well as in Gutiérrez, is closely related to praxis. "When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well, and the word is changed into idle chatter . . ."[1] "The truth of the Gospel . . . is a truth which must be done."[2]

Míguez Bonino has made the point well:

> The mobilization for "a popular uprising" and the *takeover of power* requires a serious and extended work of politization of the masses, helping them to become aware of the contradictions of the system under which they suffer. 3

It would be difficult not to agree with Míguez Bonino if the goal is "the takeover of power," but one must raise the question as to whether this concept can be abstracted from the Exodus. "This /a takeover/ is very strikingly *not* what the Exodus did," rightly observes Yoder.[4]

Besides, conscientization is a project of the elite, directed to a lower-class population. And the crucial assumption--that low-class people do not understand their own situation and must be enlightened by a selected group of individuals--must also be questioned.[5]

---

[1]Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 75. See the entire chap. 3, pp. 75-118.

[2]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 268.

[3]Doing Theology, p. 41.

[4]"Exodus and Exile," p. 300.

[5]For an excellent analysis of the limitations of this method, see Berger, Pyramids of Sacrifice, chap. 4,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Goal: Creation of a New Man

"With the Exodus a new age has struck for humanity: redemption from misery."[1] For the Israelites the Exodus meant a breaking away from servitude, the building of a new society free from misery and alienation, taking control of their own destiny, i.e., a new way of being human. In today's Latin America "it is important to keep in mind that beyond--or rather, through--the struggle against misery, injustice, and exploitation the goal is the *creation of a new man*."[2]

> The liberation of our continent means more than overcoming economic, social and political dependence. It means, in a deeper sense, to see the becoming of mankind as the process of the emancipation of man in

---

pp. 111-132. "*Whose* consciousness is supposed to be raised, and *who* is supposed to do the raising? . . . It is the consciousness of "the masses that must be raised, and it is the vanguard that will do the job" (p. 113).

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 158. Misery is caused by sin, but sin is not considered as a private, subjective condition of man; it is systemic, inherent in the structures of society, structures which perpetuate alienation and injustice. In the Roman Catholic tradition, sin has been understood mainly as a personal affair between man and God. By contrast, Gutiérrez regards sin "as a social historical fact, the absence of brotherhood and love in relationships among men . . ." (p. 175). And he adds that "sin is evident in the oppressive structures, in the exploitation of man by man, in the domination of slavery of peoples, races, and social classes" (p. 175). Consequently, redemption "implies a political liberation" (p. 176). For Miranda, sin is "interhuman injustice" (Marx and the Bible, p.281)

[2]Ibid., p. 146. As noted already, at Vatican II a shift toward *man* was observed. In *Gaudium et Spes* it was stated that "we are witnessing the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by his responsibility toward his brothers and toward history" (Art. 55).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> history. It is to see man in search of a qualitatively different society in which he will be free from all servitude, in which he will be the artisan of his own destiny. It is to seek the building up of a *new man*. 1

Gutiérrez' thesis is that the advent of the new man will be possible only in a social order radically different from the present one, since the present structure of society is responsible for maintaining the majority of human beings in sub-human conditions. It is only insofar as the present sinful structures of society are changed that the oppressed will be enabled to achieve true humanity and dignity. Gutiérrez's vision of a new society, so often mentioned in his writings, that which will develop the new man, is socialist. It is a "Latin American socialism that will promote the advent of the New Man."[2]

Some steps need to be followed in order to achieve this socialist society: First, a radical break from the status quo, i.e., a profound transformation of

---

[1]Ibid., p. 91. See chap. 2, pp. 21-42, where he contrasts the concepts of "Liberation and Development." In p. 236 he quotes Che Guevara who "rightly" pointed out that the goal of Socialism is not only the production of things but at the same time the production of men.

[2]Ibid., p. 111. A new man and a new society cannot be reached by capitalistic paths because the moving force of every type of capitalism is private profit and private ownership for profit. Consequently a new man and a new society will not be possible unless "the means of production come under social ownership" (p. 127). See also Liberation and Change, pp. 76-77.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the private property system; second, access to power of the exploited classes; and third, a social revolution that would break with dependence.[1] Even though Gutiérrez is clear about socialism as the only alternative for Latin America, he is not, however, specific in his descriptions. He quotes Sergio Méndez Arceo, archbishop of Cuernavaca, in what seems to indicate his own conviction, "I do not know what kind of socialism, but this is the direction Latin America should go."[2] This new social order, as noted earlier, will be the result of man's own undertaking.[3]

Gutiérrez does not maintain that the creation of a new society, freer and more human, will automatically make man less selfish, but insists that in such a society "it will be more possible to work realistically toward human solidarity than it is in a society torn

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 26, 27. For Gutiérrez there are only two alternatives: capitalism or socialism. See also pp. 48, 110..

[2]Ibid., p. 111. Hans Küng has leveled some pointed criticism at liberation theology on this point. He notices the absence of any concrete models of a socialist society in Latin American theological writings. Socialism as well as capitalism are not immune to defects and misuse. He objects to the liberation theologians' insistence on any uncritical identification of churches with political parties. "We must therefore again insist . . . that a Christian can be a socialist . . . but a Christian is not bound to be a socialist" (On Being a Christian /Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1976/, p. 567).

[3]See Gutiérrez, "Two Theological Perspectives," p. 241.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

asunder by inequality."[1] The commitment to the creation of a just society, and ultimately, of a new man, presupposes confidence in the future. History is no longer, as it was for the Greeks, a remembrance; "it is rather a thrust into the future."[2] Man is becoming constantly more aware that he is entering a new era; that a world fashioned by his own hands is fast approaching. "We live on the verge of man's epiphany, his 'anthropophany.'"[3]

It is argued that gospel values do not transform social reality, but man, struggling to overcome alienation and oppression transforms himself and society.[4] In the

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 112. In "The Praxis of Liberation," Gutiérrez argues against the concept that it is useless to change structures if man's heart is not changed; "this is a half truth because it disregards the fact that man's 'heart' is also transformed by changing the social and cultural structures" (p. 382). See also Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, p. 40

[2]Ibid., p. 213. See the entire chap. 11, "Eschatology and Politics," pp. 213-250, where the influence of Moltmann is evident. The salvation Gutiérrez has in mind does not embody an eschatology; history is oriented to the future, but the future described by Gutiérrez is more in tune with Marxist dialectic than with Biblical perspective. See also pp. 160-168.

[3]Ibid.

[3]See Berryman, "Latin American Liberation Theology," p. 374. Oliveros Maqueo, in his extended work on liberation theology, justifies this emphasis on man as the agent who transforms society, which in turn becomes the place where a new man can evolve, on the assumption that salvation takes place in history; the goal is "instaurar el Reinado de Dios aquí en la tierra como un nuevo orden de justicia" (Liberación y teología, p. 14).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

projected classless society social differences will be completely eliminated and man himself will be transformed.[1] It is in their respective anthropologies that Marxism and biblical Christianity stand in tension with each other. Gilkey is right when he states that the "warped social structures are *consequences* not causes of human greed, pride, insecurity and self-concern which in turn flow from the exercise of freedom, not its oppression."[2]

If we pay attention to history we will be cautious in equating a Marxist-oriented society with liberation, because all empirical evidence points to the fact that Marxist societies bring no real advance in human freedom. In practice, "the new class opposes *any* type of freedoms, ostensibly for the purpose of preserving 'socialist' ownership," comments Djilas.[3]

---

[1]In a popular manual on Marxism-Leninism, published in the Soviet Union, what seems to be the assumption in much liberation theology is clearly stated: "oybkuc self-government presupposes a different type of man and, in turn, creates him. The Communist man is not an egotist and not an individualist" (Fundamental of Marxism-Leninism, rev. 2d ed. /Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1963/, p. 712).

[2]Langdon Gilkey, Reaping the Whirlwind, p. 236. Italics his. This is not to deny that evil social structures are also dehumanizing.

[3]Milovan Djilas, The New Class. An Analysis of the Communist System (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), p. 65. See pp. 37-69 for an analysis of the "new class." "A new exploiting and governing class is born from the exploited class" (p. 42). If we want to raise the poor to liberation, we should aim at a society that is fully free, one that will allow people liberty to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

There are, besides the specific lessons singled out above, many other inspirations that are derived from the Exodus. The fact that the midwives disobeyed the "lawful" authority and refused to kill the male children of the Hebrew women[1] reflects the biblical desacralization of political systems. Hence, civil disobedience is allowed. When the people move into the future they are to bring expropriated provisions with them. The order was given to plunder the Egyptians.[2] It was an instance of expropriation without compensation that applies with equal force in today's liberating strategies. The sending of the manna[3] was an egalitarian gift, to each according to his needs. The generation that perished in the wilderness, on the road to freedom, teaches that the fulfillment of the dream of liberation can be only vaguely perceived in this generation.[4]

---

oppose, to speak, to criticize the government. "There are powerful forces who are working in solidarity with the poor toward their liberation from oppression, but who believe in creating a society which is itself very represssive (C. Forman, "The Truth Which Is at Both Extremes," IRM 66 /1977/:32).

[1]Exod 1:17. Moses' mother refused to obey the order, and in an act of open disobedience refused to throw her boy into the river. Exod 2:2.

[2]Exod 3:22; 11:2, 3; 12:35, 36.

[3]Exod 16.

[4]Num 14:29. Gutiérrez observes on this point that "what Karl Marx wrote more than a hundred years ago is still valid: 'The present generation is like the Jews whom Moses led through the desert. Not only does it have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conclusion

The meaning of "liberation is not clearly defined in A Theology of Liberation, in spite of the fact that it is equated with "salvation."[1] Yet, from the very outset Gutiérrez states that his expounding of liberation would be limited to a rough outline, while "various shades of meaning and deeper levels of understanding"[2] would emerge along the way. Hence, we should not expect everything clearly spelled out in this pioneering work. Perhaps Gutiérrez' clearest definition of liberation, the one that embodies his thought more

---

to conquer a new world, it also has to perish to give room to the men who are to live in the new world'" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 146).

[1]"Liberation is another word for salvation" ("Terrorism, Liberation and Sexuality," The Witness /April 1977/:10). See also A Theology of Liberation, pp. 150-152, 168. Sölle has observed that "theology of liberation starts with a new translation of the old word *soteria*. . . . The tradition usually translated it as salvation. Now we change the translation (which is what theologians ought to do) and say: *soteria* is liberation" (Dorothee Sölle, "Resistance: Toward a First World Theology," ChrChris 39 /1979/:178).

[2]A Theology of Liberation, p. 1. Speaking of liberation in general, James Thomas O'Connor points out that shortly after Medellín the term "liberation" had been so misused that it became a "dangerous concept, laden with ambiguities, almost begging for misinterpretations" (Quoted by Harold B. Kuhn, "Liberation Theology: A Semantic Approach," WesleyThJ 15 /1980/:35). A major source of difficulty resides in the fact that any type of struggle for emancipation in the Third World is seen as Christian liberation. If a person, as a result of oppression, decides to challenge the violence of the oppressor by taking up arms, could not we see such a person "as an agent of God responding to the divine call, 'I have seen the affliction of my people' /?/" (Canaan Banana, "The Biblical Bases for Liberation Struggles," IRM 68 /1979/:422).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

accurately, is: "Liberation means shaking off the yoke of economic, social, political, and cultural domination to which we have been submitted."[1] For him, "the theology of liberation is a theology of salvation in the concrete historical and political circumstances of today."[2]

Liberation theologians deny that theology can be done apart from commitment to liberative political struggle. This liberative praxis aims at the construction of a new "historical project," which would not be equated with the Kingdom of God.[3] Yet it is in the active commitment to this historical project that men participate in the creation of the Kingdom by bringing about the liberation of men in history. This historical project in which man moves from social and political liberation to liberation in history, i.e., psychological

---

[1]"Contestation in Latin America," in Teodoro Jiménez Urresti, ed., Contestation in the Church (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), p. 43.

[2]"The Hope of Liberation," p. 68. See also A Theology of Liberation, pp. 150-152.

[3]"We can say that the historical, political liberating event *is* the growth of the Kingdom and *is* a salvific event; but this is not *the* coming of the Kingdom, not *all* of salvation" (Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 177). At this point one wishes that Gutiérrez had elaborated a bit and had been more specific about what else he means by salvation; yet he never ventures beyond the realms of history. All categories in which eschatology is made to transcend history are not contemplated. See pp. 160-168. Dussel writes, "We just fashion the Kingdom through concrete historical projects"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

liberation, self-creation, and responsibility is *utopia*, the creation of a new type of man.[1]

Thus liberation has to do with the political, social, economic, and cultural realms. It aims at overcoming all alienation and oppression, and thus leads to the creation of a new man in a qualitatively new society.

It is understandable that liberation theologians react to an excessive privatization in the understanding of salvation in much of traditional theology. What becomes disquieting, however, is the clear absence of any notion that salvation, even when it has relevance for life in history, also points *beyond* the historical. They seem to have moved too far to the opposite extreme.[2]

(History and the Theology of Liberation, p. 170). See also Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, pp. 56, 57.

[1]See Christine E. Gudorf, Catholic Social Teaching on Liberation Themes (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), pp. 61, 62. Leonardo Boff states that "utopia," according to modern science, "does not have the negative meaning of illusion or flight from the conflictive reality of the world. It possesses a highly positive depth and signifies that capacity to transcend, a creative fantasy, the dialectical reason of man. Man can rise above his own historical constructions and project a not-yet-experienced but still possible reality. . . . The utopia of the kingdom of God does not mean the consecration of a certain type of world and a certain type of future. Rather, it surpasses the totality of the concrete forms of this world in function of another, more human and more open to the coming of God. Jesus, with the announcement of the kingdom of God, did not postulate another world, but rather a new world; this old broken world would be totally transfigured" (Statement by Leonardo Boff, Theology in the Americas, ed. Sergio Torres and John Eagleson /Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976/, p. 295.

[2]Even as sympathetic a critic as Orlando Costas

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In pages 36 and 37 of his book Gutiérrez summarizes three approaches to the process of liberation, as already noted: liberation as external, internal, and spiritual. In relation to this third level he states: "Christ the Savior liberates man from sin, which is the ultimate root of all disruption of friendship and of all injustice and oppression."[1] This is soundly biblical, but when he goes on to define sin as only a social, historical fact, again one is left with the impression that justice has not been done to the testimony of Scripture.[2]

---

concludes that "building a just, peaceful and fraternal society *is* what salvation is all about" in liberation theology (The Church and Its Mission, p. 234). It has to be admitted that the way some Christian doctrines have been understood, especially the doctrine of life after death, have tended to promote an otherworldliness that undercut the commitment to the cause of justice in this world. This leads some people to conclude that "a religion which sees this life as the only life will take this life seriously and work toward bringing the kingdom of God on earth" (Carolyn M. Craft in a review of Dorothee Sölle's book, Death by Bread Alone, CrossCur 38 [1978-79]:480).

[1]A Theology of Liberation, p. 37.

[2]Neuhaus reacts a bit impatiently to the seeming ambiguity in Gutiérrez; "there seem to be two Gutiérrez," he says, "the one quotes Fanon and Che Guevara almost as scripture, proclaiming that we are on the eve of a 'revolutionary anthropophany, in which historically inexorable forces are creating 'the new man in the new society.' . . . The second Gutiérrez comes out of the closet in the notes, carefully positioning his arguments in relation to the large theological and political discourse both of the past and of the international community. He cautions his reader against understanding what he has just said as what he has just said" ("Liberation Theology and the Captivities of Jesus," p. 48).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

If the aim of liberation theology is to establish a new society on this earth, and the only instruments with which to achieve it are human and worldly, then it is understandable why the Marxist strategy for change is seen as the best available option,[1] and why the Exodus is generally selected as a preferential Biblical model.

Salvation, according to Scripture, is holistic; it has to do with man's eternal destiny, as well as with life in the here and now; it challenges the Christian to be concerned with personal holiness as well as with social justice. And the Exodus model, as will be seen in the next chapter, provides more than inspiration for a this-worldly liberation with an open future. The theology of the Exodus is a theology of liberation with a purpose: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me," is the constand demand.[1]

---

[1]Knapp is correct when he observes that "/Gutiérrez'/ A Theology of Liberation . . . seems to find too little in the Bible and too much in a Marxist analysis, all the way down to the style and methods of participation in the liberation process" ("A Preliminary Dialogue with Gutiérrez," p. 24). See also Míguez Bonino, Doing Theology, pp. 128, 129.

[2]Exod 4:22 (here, "let My son go . . ."); 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CHAPTER III

THE EXODUS AND SALVATION HISTORY

Genesis: Necessary Background

Liberation theologians, in their concern that theology be relevant to people who are victims of a situation that is seen as unjust, a situation that forces them to experience oppression and live at the margins of decency and freedom, have called attention to some emphases of the gospel that have been, for some reason or another, sadly neglected in most traditional theologies.[1] These theologians have gleaned from Scripture, and especially from the Exodus and the prophets,

---

[1]Early in its history the Christian Church fell under the influence of dualistic Greek philosophy where reality was divided into two spheres: the *superior*, the realm of reason, soul, the supernatural, salvation; and the *inferior*, the realm of matter, body, nature, the mundane. Since then the Church devoted its almost undivided attention to the supernatural side of reality, and showed very little interest in earthly human life as such. This gave rise to a one-sided, truncated soteriology, and to a distorted understanding of the mission of the Church. See J. D. Gort, "Gospel for the Poor?" Missio 7 (1979):326-220. In the words of Gutiérrez, "anxious to dialogue with the thought of its time, this theology used Platonic and Neoplatonic categories. In these philosophies it found a metaphysics which stressed the existence of a higher world and the transcendence of an Absolute from which everything came and to which everything returned. The present life, on the other hand, was regarded as essentially contingent and was not

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

some valuable insights regarding the meaning of salvation, insights that should be gratefully acknowledged by all Christians. However, even when we commend liberation theologians for taking seriously the situation of the poor and marginalized in Latin America, admire their commitment to work on behalf of a more just society, and acknowledge their contributions, we would like to contend that the Exodus story contains additional features that can easily be missed or distorted unless it is seen as an integral part of a larger story, and is approached with a hermeneutics that does justice to the unity and integrity of Scripture.[1]

If one wishes to understand a basic biblical concept, it becomes indispensable to enter the biblical world, that is, the world as described by the biblical writers, because "biblical theology if it ultimately forces exegetical reconstructions into forms alien to

---

valued sufficiently" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 4). See also Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation, pp. 23, 24.

[1]John H. Stek correctly observes that a situational hermeneutics, when absolutized, means the silencing of Scriptures. "It reduces the Bible to a tool (or weapon) that we grasp in our hands to promote whatever cause seems to us to hold hope for the world--for the world as we see it" ("Salvation, Justice and Liberation in the Old Testament," CalThJ 13 /1978/:133). It is proper, in fact, indispensable, for experience to motivate our theology, but the crucial question is where do the answers come from? Culture should help us formulate the questions, but the answers should be provided by Scripture, if we intend to do Christian theology.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the text and its world, has become just as guilty of proof-texting as was classical dogmatics."[1]

Christianity, as a religion of divine revelation, accepts that God has revealed himself in Holy Scriptures. Consequently, our primary point of orientation should be Scripture, not culture or society. Our analysis of society, however respected and illuminating, should never constitute a second source of revelation.[2]

Priority of Creation

In the last few centuries there have been persistent attempts by theologians to redefine the biblical message in terms of frames of reference borrowed from newly emerging conceptions of reality.[3] Until recently the opening words of Scripture, "In the beginning God

---

[1]Armerding, "Exodus: the Old Testament Foundation of Liberation," p. 57. As Dewey M. Beegle has remarked, "The Judeo-Christian faith is rooted in history, and anyone who ignores the biblical insights is doomed to the frustration of trial and error in attempting to rediscover the ultimates of life" (Moses, the Servant of Yahweh [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.], 1972, p. 11).

[2]See Clark H. Pinnock, "An Evangelical Theology of Liberation," Sojourners (February 1976):30.

[3]See Hans N. Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974). Frei analyzes the "change of the tide" that took place during the eighteenth century in the way of understanding Scripture from that of the Reformers. While the Reformers accepted the literal meaning of the Word, during the eighteenth century, with new ideas derived from elsewhere, interpretation became a "matter of fitting the biblical story into another world with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

created the heavens and the earth,"[1] were taken at their face value as the final answer to the question of cosmogony in the Christian world. Today, however, it has become more fashionable to look to science than to the Bible for answers to the questions of the origin of the universe.[2] But, it is not necessary to accept the "Documentary Hypothesis"[3] and conclude that the account of

---

another story rather than incorporating that world into the biblical story" (p. 130).

[1]Gen 1:1.

[2]D. F. Payne, in Genesis One Reconsidered (London: Tyndale Press, 1962), identifies a threefold attack on the first chapter of Genesis during the nineteenth century to be especially responsible for this shift: first, the challenge posed by the scientific community, especially spearheaded by Darwin's revolutionary hypothesis of evolution to explain the origin of species; second, the challenge of comparative religion studies, which called attention to the similarity between Genesis and ancient mythological accounts of creation, found particularly among Israel's neighbors; and third, the challenge of literary criticism, which argues for two accounts of creation in the first two chapters of Genesis, in contradiction to each other at various points. See Bruce K. Waldtke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3. Part I: Introduction to Biblical Cosmogony" BSac 132 (1975):25-36, especially pp. 25, 26, and H. J. Sorensen, "Creation Account," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 4:424.

[3]Modern critical scholars generally agree that the first five books of the Old Testament were not authored by Moses, but rather reflect four different strands of tradition. See Harold H. Rowley, The Growth of the Old Testament (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 25-37; Alexa Seltzer, "Modern Old Testament Criticism," Raymond Brown, ed., The Jerome Bible Commentary, 2 vols. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), 2:590-604. For a conservative analysis and evaluation of the documentary theory of the Pentateuch and the developments within the current school of form criticism

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

creation is placed as the result of circumstances at the beginning of the Bible. On the contrary, if one wishes to enter the biblical world in order to understand biblical concepts, it is indispensable to accept the record as it stands, in harmony with both the Jewish and Christian traditions. As far as any starting point for understanding the Old Testament, the creation story should not be set aside, because it is from that point onwards that the story becomes cumulative.[1]

At this point a basic methodological assumption of liberation theology, i.e., that the Bible begins with Exodus, needs to be questioned. According to the Genesis story, creation faith in Israel antecedes and stands independent of liberation. It follows logically, then, that the creator God, the God who created everything--heavenly bodies, sea, animals, and all nature--could use these elements to accomplish his redemptive work. This is why when Israel told the story of the Exodus--the wilderness wandering, the conquest of Canaan--the deliverance is depicted not only in historical human actors and political events, but in the interplay of the forces of nature as well: plagues, parting of waters, sending

---

see Roland K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 495-541.

[1]See C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsh, Commentary on the Old Testament, Fifth printing (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 1:17.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of manna, quails, water, making the sun and the moon stand still. Landes accurately observes:

> But out of her /Israel's/ experience in liberating events, Israel did not at some distant later date infer that the liberation-God must be the Creator-God, but rather, because she already knew Yahweh as the Creator of heaven and earth, she understood how it was that wind and sea, birds and insects, sun and moon could be used as instruments supporting the divine liberating activity. 1

Thus, for Israel, the God who had created the cosmos was also the God who extended his power into history to accomplish their liberation, and, like the original cosmic creation, Israel was also created out of nothing, to serve the creator-redeemer God. And, contrary to other ancient near-Eastern people, the creation of the world by God was not a liberating act in Israel's understanding.[2]

As we state this, we are conscious of the fact that many contemporary Old Testament scholars see in the "stories" of creation remnants of pagan creation epics which always involved liberating struggles. Boman, for

---

[1]Landes, "Creation and Liberation," p. 80. This in no way denies the possibility that the liberative acts of the Exodus or its persistent anticipation might have influenced Moses in the selection and arrangement of the material included in Genesis. The preservation of Joseph's bones remained a silent and powerful testimony of his unshaken faith in the liberating promise of the God of his fathers (Gen 50:24-26).

[2]See ibid., pp. 80, 81, and Jacques B. Doukhan The Literary Structure of the Genesis Creation Story. Th.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1978, pp. 223-222, for a discussion of the priority of creation in the faith of Israel.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

instance, points out that the liberation of Israel at the Red Sea, the bringing back of the captives from Babylon, and the creation of the world are three examples of the same divine act. He then concludes that "the consequence of this recognition is that the creation of the world presupposes a terrible situation which God had to overcome."[1]

This is not, however, the idea that a careful reading of the account necessarily conveys. Rather, what impresses one is the absolute power of the transcendent God calling all things into existence. As Eugene H. Maly has well expressed it: "Whereas the pagan epics depict creation as the result of a struggle between the gods and the forces of chaos, the Biblical account stresses the effortless activity of the one God."[2]

Even admitting the presence of similarities in the Genesis account of creation and the myths of neighboring peoples, it becomes apparent that Genesis systematically contradicts those mythical notions which

---

[1]Boman, "The Biblical Doctrine of Creation," p. 149. He even sees in God's rest after creation another indication of hindrances that have been overcome and hostile powers that have been conquered by creation. Westerman states that "behind this /the division of the waters by the firmament/ one can still clearly sense the Babylonian myth of creation in which Marduk splits Tiamat . . . and forms the world out of her halves" (The Genesis account of Creation, p. 15).

[2]"Genesis," The Jerome Bible Commentary, 1:10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

do not harmonize with their faith in one God, creator of all things.[1]

What can be said, in this context, about Israel's literary "borrowing" from its neighbors? How can the apparent--and real--similarities with other creation stories, mainly the Babylonian story of creation in the epic Enuma Elish,[2] be accounted for, when there are also some basic differences?[3] Westerman has significantly observed:

---

[1]Gerhard Hasel has forcefully argued that the Genesis story of creation represents a polemic against pagan cosmologies. See "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," EvQ 46 (1974):81-102. He points out, for example, that in Gen 1 *tehom* (deep) is clearly inanimate, a part of the cosmos, not the foe of God, but simply one section of the created world. "It does not offer any resistance to God's creative activity. . . . To suggest that there is in Gen 1:2 the remnant of a latent conflict between a chaos monster and a creator God is to read into it from mythology" (pp. 83, 84). The mention of *tanninim*, great sea monsters," is frequently seen as presenting elements of strife. Hasel notes that the word *bara* is used in referring to their creation--the first use of this word since verse 1--suggesting that the *tanninim* were also created out of nothing by an act of God's power. A polemic emphasis becomes transparent: "The *tanninim* are aquatic creatures which were 'created' by God; they are not pre-existent rivals of the Creator which needed to be conquered as in Canaanite mythology" (p. 87). The same polemic intent is seen in the purpose of man's creation. These mythological accounts that view "the creation of man as an afterthought to provide the gods with food and to satisfy their physical needs, is contradicted in Gen 1" (p. 90).

[2]See Alexander Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, 2d. ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951) for a translation of cuneiform tables of various Babylonian creation stories, with introductions by the author. For a discussion on the resemblances and differences between the Biblical and Babylonian account of creation, see Merril F. Unger, Archeology and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954), pp. 26-38.

[3]As an example of discontinuity with its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Scholars in many branches of research, historians of religion, ethnologists, theologians, and others, have made the surprising discovery that reflection on the primeval era of mankind is not characterized by limitless variety, with the result that there are endless possibilities of presenting the origins of things; on the contrary, these are surprisingly meager. The types of creation accounts are not without limit; rather there are a few basic forms with variations, which can be quite easily understood throughout the whole world. 1

What seems to be a "surprising discovery," that only a "few basic forms" of creation stories are found, not only in the Ancient Near East, but "throughout the whole world," is what one would expect, if the different accounts have somehow a common source. These were traditions common to all peoples of antiquity, and their common elements may very well point to a time when the human race lived together and had a common faith, according to the biblical account.[2]

---

neighbors, mention can be made of Israel's higher theology. How could it be explained in the light of some of its neighbors' more developed cultures. Bruce K. Wadtke has observed: "Neither the brilliant Greek philosophers of later ages, nor Israel's Babylonian and Egyptian contemporaries, so far ahead of them in the arts and sciences, attained to it. All the world was steeped in mythical thought except Israel" ("The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3. Part IV," BSac 132 /1975/:330). Divine revelation only would account for this fact; the Israelites were constantly charged with being stiffnecked (Deut 31:27; Jer 7:26; 17:23) and inclined to conform to religions and customs that they came in contact with (Deut 31:16).

[1]Claus Westermann, Creation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 120.

[2]Gen 11:1-10. A. R. Millard observes that "a material relationship between the two versions exists, of course, but one no longer assumes a direct dependence of the Biblical tradition on the Babylonian. Both versions are independent arrangements of still older traditions

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Genesis: A Prelude to Exodus

Redemptive history in the Old Testament unfolds in the specific context of the primeval history, as recorded in Gen 1-11.[1] Severed from this "prelude," the rest of the Bible would be less comprehensible, it would lack foundation and perspective.[2] In the words of Morris,

---

("A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story," TyndB /1967/:3). Unger comments further on the nature of these older traditions: "Early races of men wherever they wandered took with them these earliest traditions of mankind, and in varying latitudes and climes have modified them according to their religions and mode of thought. Modifications as time proceeded resulted in the corruption of the original pure tradition. The Genesis account is not only the purest, but everywhere bears the unmistakable impress of divine inspiration when compared with the extravagances and corruptions of other accounts" (Archaeology and the Old Testament, p. 37).

[1]Many a famous scholar, since Wellhausen (1844-1918), has contended that the book of Genesis, especially its first eleven chapters, are legendary in nature, rather than historical. Strong dogmatic presuppositions account for this stance: miracles are not considered possible; plenary inspiration is denied; Israel's history is not allowed to rise higher than the history of its neighbors; evolutionary standards are employed in measuring historical progress. See H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), pp. 11, 12 where he discusses some basic facts that these presuppositions overlook. Chaps. 1-11 form a necessary introduction to the story of the patriarchs, which in turn introduces the pivotal point of all Old Testament history, i.e., the Exodus and the covenant. See Maly, "Genesis," p. 10. It should also be remembered that the New Testament writers, and Jesus himself, viewed the Genesis record as history. See Matt 19:4-6; 2 Pet 3:5; Heb 4:4.

[2]There is evidence that critical scholarship is willing to take more seriously the inner unity of the biblical texts, and exegesis to pay more attention to the specificity of the biblical perspective. See, as an example, Bernhard W. Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1-11," JBL 97 (1978): 23-39. Anderson observes that "various scholarly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The books of the Old Testament, narrating God's dealings with the people of Israel, would be provincial and bigoted, were they not set in the context of God's developing purposes for all mankind, as laid down in the early chapters of Genesis. The New Testament, describing the execution and implementation of God's plan for man's redemption, is redundant and anachronistic, except in the light of man's desperate need for salvation, as established in the record of man's primeval history, recorded only in Genesis. 1

The book of Genesis provides vital information concerning the origins of all things, much of which would otherwise be inaccessible to man. And it is true that what a person believes regarding his origin will to a large extent determine his belief concerning his purpose in life and his destiny. A naturalistic concept of beginnings will indicate a naturalistic program for the future. On the other hand, belief in a divine origin--at the hands of a holy, loving God--will disclose a divine purpose in history and the assurance of the consummation of that purpose.[2]

---

impulses have moved us away from an excessive preoccupation with the genetic development of the text to exegesis that takes with greater seriousness the style and structure of the received texts and that considers how these texts function in their narrative contexts" (p. 28). See also D. J. A. Clines, "Themes in Genesis 1-11," CBQ 38 (1976):483-507. It is true that this concern, to take the Biblical perspective seriously, should not be divorced from another of the central themes of current ethical thinking, namely the concern to pay close attention to the data of the concrete situation.

[1]Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record. A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1976), p. 17.

[2]See ibid., pp. 17, 18. Some liberation theologians work from the stated premise of a naturalistic,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Bible informs us that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;"[1] then he created man in his own image, "male and female,"[2] and sent them forth into history with a signal blessing: "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."[3] Liberation theologians see the Genesis account of creation as a source for interpreting man's vocation as essentially God's invitation to share in the divine creative power. Furthermore, a direct connection is seen between the creation of man and woman in the image and

---

evolutionistic origin of man. See for example, Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation, pp. 37-40, a section entitled "The Origins of Man." He states: "It is certain that mankind arose from within the animal kingdom. From within the class known as mammals there arose the insectivores. The latter gave rise to the primates, and man developed out of that group" (p. 38).

[1]Gen 1:1. These words are foundational in Scripture. Their acceptance as historical in nature would give meaning and perspective to the rest of Scripture and would refute all philosophies that have arisen in an effort to explain the origin and meaning of the world when Gen 1:1 is not accepted as fact: "(1) It refutes *atheism* because the universe was created by God. (2) It refutes *pantheism* for God is *transcendent* to that which he created. (3) It refutes *polytheism*, for *one* God created all things. (4) It refutes *materialism*, for matter had a *beginning*. (5) It refutes *dualism*, because God was *alone* when he created. (6) It refutes *humanism*, because God, *not man*, is the ultimate reality. (7) It refutes *evolutionism* because God *created* all things" (Morris, The Genesis Record, p. 38).

[2]Gen 1:27.

[3]Gen 1:28.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

likeness of God, sharing in God's creative power, and the need of the poor and the powerless to exert their own creativity in building the future.[1] It would seem, however, that Genesis situates man as God's *steward*, rather than as co-creator. It was in fact his attempt "to be like God,"[2] to abandon his role as steward in order to assert his own autonomy, to determine his own destiny, that made him a sinner.[3]

The first chapters of the book of Genesis not only describe the creation of a perfect world made for man and woman and placed under their dominion on condition of their loyalty; they also record the tragedy of man's fall from his created state of innocence and fellowship with God into a state of sinfulness and alienation, which fundamentally altered his relationship with God, with his fellowmen and with nature.[4] In his proud

---

[1]See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 158, 159.

[2]Gen 3:5.

[3]See Rolf Rendtorff, "'Subdue the Earth': Man and Nature in the Old Testament," TD 27 (1979):213-216.

[4]The concept of "original sin," the distortion of man's nature following the fall which produced a profound imbalance in him, plays no part in the thinking of liberation theologians (Gutiérrez devotes only one footnote reference to Gen 3, and never deals with "original sin"). Sin is seen as a social, historical fact which perpetuates alienation, injustice, and oppression. In liberation theology, as Sölle puts it, "one finds an emphasis on the contingency of original sin; it once came into this world and therefore can disappear also from a more human society than the one we now have. Sin

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

attempt to become like God, man became subject to another power, which brought him shame, banishment, toil, and death. Yet, God, in his mercy, mitigated the judgment: a covering was given to alleviate his shame; childbearing would be with pain, but the blessing of fertility was not withdrawn, though it would have to be exercised with sweat and toil in an earth also bearing the curse; and the allegiance to the new power would be broken by God himself, who curses the serpent,[1] promises to put enmity --a divinely instigated hostility--against the serpent, and announces the final and total defeat of the instigator of the rebellion.[2]

---

originated under certain circumstances. If greed and lust for power are no longer structurally rewarded in society, then change is possible" (Sölle, "Resistance: Toward a First World Theology," p. 180). Miranda explains that "the Yahwist decided to write a prehistory of the Exodus in order to explain the origin of sin and in order that a sinful world might feel the need for the intervention of Yahweh and for the election of a people which would have the mission of abolishing sin in the world" (Marx and the Bible, p. 89). The prevalent belief that man's predicament is due to ignorance rather than culpable evil, of which liberation theology participates, is one of the outstanding achievements of the Age of Reason. See Calvin D. Linton, "Man's Difficulty--Ignorance or Evil?" CT 9 (1964-5):18-20. It is, however, the initial creation and the fall that determine what follows, i.e., man's aversion to God that will lead to the intervention of God in a new creation, that of His people.

[1]Even though the curse was pronounced against the serpent, its real thrust was against the evil spirit concealed behind the serpent, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan" (Rev 12:9). See Rom 16-20, 2 Cor 11:3, 14.

[2]Genesis 3:15 contains, in the bruising of the serpent's head, the first promise recorded in the Bible,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, a place no longer appropriate for them in their fallen condition. God's justice required punishment, while his infinite love provided conditions calculated to make them realize their lost condition and seek salvation. Through God's action, man could again be restored to his original dignity and destiny. Thus, history remained open for salvation, "although the actualization of this possibility awaited God's redemptive initiatives."[1]

Outside the gates of paradise, Cain was born.[2] The succeeding history of that first born indicates a progressive alienation of man from his brother and from

---

adequately called *Protoevangelium*, literally, the first Gospel, promising the ultimate victory of the Redeemer. This prophecy clearly looks forward to the time when Satan, the old serpent, will be completely crushed beneath the feet of the woman's triumphat seed. See Herbert C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, pp. 163-170. Critical scholarship is in general doubtful that this passage can be regarded in any sense a *Protoevanglium*. Von Rad, for example, states that the exegesis of the early Church which found a messianic prophecy in this text, a reference to a final victory of the woman's seed, "does not agree with the sense of passage /sic/ . . ." (Genesis A Commentary, p. 90). It would seem obvious that Gen 3:15 contains more than a passing reference to the emnity between man and snakes.

[1]Stek, "Salvation, Liberation and Justice," p. 138. I am indebted to this excellent article for some of the insights in this section.

[2]Eve exclaimed at the birth of Cain, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord" (Gen 4:11). The enigmatic phrase can be translated, "I have gotten a man, even the Lord." Did Eve expect that her son was the promised one, who would be victorious over the serpent? At least the text records her language and seems to indicate that she had some understanding of God's promise as recorded in Gen 3:15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

God. After he slew his brother, the theme of judgment again appears: there was another banishment from the immediate presence of the Lord, and he became a wanderer in Nod.[1] Alienated from God, unwilling to submit to the divine plan, he took his destiny into his own hands. Thus the culture that Cain and his descendants developed east of Eden was a godless culture, developed with the purpose of alleviating their alienation from God and from other men; "a heroic effort at self-redemption."[2]

The brief biblical record provides practically the only information we have concerning the first human civilization--the descendants of Cain--that filled the earth with corruption and were later completely destroyed by the flood. The story portrayed in the first chapter of the book of Genesis clearly testifies to the fact that, alienated from God, a person becomes corrupt and

---

[1]Just as Adam and Eve had been expelled from the garden, so Cain, the murderer of his brother Abel, became a wanderer in the land of Wandering. Since *Nod* (Gen 4:16) means "wandering," it is possible that this was not an actual geographical location but merely a figure of speech for Cain's mode of life, caused by his constant fear that other people might seek to avenge Abel's blood.

[2]Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation," p. 139. He built a city (Gen 3:17); one of his descendants introduced poligamy (3:19), thus changing the creation order of human life. Their creative powers were used in devising means to accumulate wealth and in inventions to increase their pleasure (3:20-22). The biblical record indicates that civilization at that early stage made greater progress among the alienated from God than among those who were loyal to him. They did "all in their power to make an empty existence attractive by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

death is his lot, whatever his achievements may have been.

God, the record states, gave Adam and Eve "another offspring in place of Abel," and they named him Seth.[1] His descendants "began to call upon the name of the Lord."[2] From this line of descendants were born Noah and the remnant that was saved from the destruction of the flood. The divine blessing, "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth," was again repeated—this time to Noah, his family, and every living thing on earth.[3] Here God added a special covenant with nature: "while the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."[4] The contents of these promises formed a covenant between God and every living creature, as signified

---

the cultivation of the natural resources of the world" (Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, p. 215).

[1]Gen 4:25. The name Seth means "appointed," "substitute," which would indicate that Adam and Eve had faith that it was through this son that God's promises would eventually be fulfilled. See Morris, The Genesis Record, p. 149.

[2]Gen 4:26. There is a notable change of emphasis in the description of the descendants of Adam through Seth. The boasting and human accomplishments of Cain's descendants gave way to faith in God and worship. The expression "to call upon the name of the Lord" usually means worship in the Old Testament. See Ps 116:17, Zeph 3:9. Although the descendants of Seth acknowledged God's authority, they also were members of a *fallen* race. Gen 5:1, 2 recalls man's creation in God's image, and verse 3 tells of Seth being in the image and likeness of his father. But between Adam's creation and Seth's birth occurred the fall.

[3]Gen 8:17; 9:1, 7.

[4]Gen 8:22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by the rainbow in the sky.[1] On this side of the flood, with the saved remnant, there stands a new beginning which goes back, not to Genesis 1, but to Genesis 3 with the fall and its consequences. Man's nature remains corrupted: "the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth."[2] Man's sinfulness, his alienation from God, continues to make itself manifest; and at Babel, Noah's descendants again gave evidence of their disregard for God's ways and their intentions to take charge of their own destiny. Like the Cainite generation they attempted, by their own efforts, to develop a civilization in which they could find security. This godless enterprise was frustrated by God, and the builders of Babel were scattered over the face of the earth.[3] Helmer Ringgren summarizes the two-fold aspect of Yahweh's intervention at Babel:

Theologically, the building of the tower in Gen 11

---

[1]Gen 9:8-17. See Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, p. 81. In his mercy, God assured Noah and his family of divine protection in a world now disturbed and half destroyed by a catastrophe.

[2]Gen 8:21.

[3]The account of the Tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues and dispersion of its builders is not considered historical by modern critical scholarship. Nahum M. Sarna asks: "Does this mean that the patriarchal narratives are merely symbolic and not to be regarded as factual? Are they in the same categories as the stories related in the first eleven chapters of Genesis?" ("Understanding Genesis /New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1966/, p. 85). See Dale S. DeWitt, "The Historical Background of Genesis 11:1-9: Babel or Ur?" JETS 22 (1979): 15-26, and Allan P. Ross, "The Dispersion of the Nations in Genesis 11:1-9," BSac 138 (1981):119-138.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is interpreted as an act of human arrogance and rebellion against God; accordingly, Yahweh intervenes against its builders and scatters them over the whole earth. This action of God is both punishment and a preventive measure; it prevents men from going too far in their pride.[1]

It is in the aftermath of Babel that redemption history takes a new turn with the election of Abraham which includes separation from his country and from his people, the descendants of the builders of Babel.[2]

> Go forth from your country,
> And from your relatives
> And from your father's house,
> To the land which I will show you;
> And I will make you a great nation,
> And I will bless you,
> And make your name great;
> And so you shall be a blessing;
> And I will bless those who bless you.
> And the one who curses you I will curse.
> And I you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 3

In the call of Abraham the divine blessing, originally bestowed upon Adam, and later on Noah, is reiterated. This time, however, it is defined in more specific terms: through him all the families of the earth would be

---

[1]"*babhel*," Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, 1:467.

[2]Abraham was separated not only from his community but also from the gods that were worshipped by his own family: "from ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods" (Josh 24:2).

[3]Gen 12:1-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

blessed.[1] Until some time after Babel, God had been dealing with mankind as a whole; but with the election of Abraham, a new approach on God's part is observed: the preparation of a nation through which God's redeeming purpose could be extended to other nations.[2] The promises to Abraham are underlined by the establishing of a covenant, in which God commits himself to keep his promises, and Abraham is asked to "keep my covenant you

---

[1]Abraham was not only to receive a blessing, but to be a blessing, to become a medium of blessing to others. In Gen 12 a new epoch begins; the earlier one had ended with the dispersion of the people, and the implied question was what could be done for the nations that were more and more alienated from God, whose blessings had resulted in such proliferation. The answer is given in another blessing: God calls Abraham in whom all families of the earth would be blessed. See Toward an Old Testament Theology, pp. 56-59.

[2]Gen 12:1 points to the fact that a new stage in the history of revelation had been reached. God now speaks to one man in the midst of the families of the earth. In the light of this, it is difficult to understand liberation theology's hermeneutical elevation of the one and undivided history of God's salvific acts. The account on the universal scope of revelation is a new departure in modern theology, which has in general been dominated by historical critical methods. For a study of the "two versions" of Israel's history, i.e., the picture which Israel itself has drawn up of its history and the version of Israel's history as reconstructed by modern historiographers employing the historical critical method, see Carl Braaten, New Directions in Theology Today, vol. 2: History and Hermeneutics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), especially chap. 1, "The Idea of Revelation Through History," pp. 11-32; John J. Collins, "The 'Historical Character' of the Old Testament in Recent Biblical Theology," CBQ 41 (1979):185-204; Roland de Vaux, The Bible and the Ancient Near East (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971), particularly chap. 3, "Is It Possible to Write a 'Theology of the Old Testament'?" pp. 49-62; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Problem of History in Old Testament Theology," AUSS 8 (1970):23-50.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and your descendants after you throughout their generations."[1]

It is true that some scholars are still skeptical concerning the Biblical claim that God made a covenant with the patriarchs or even of the historicity of the patriarchs themselves.[2] Bright concludes, however, that the evidence "gives us every right to affirm that the patriarchal narratives are firmly based on history. . . . We can assert with full confidence that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were actual historical beings."[3]

The call and covenant with Abraham remain foundational in the unfolding of salvation history: the covenant blessing was transmitted to Abraham's descendants. Isaac and Jacob, and then, mainly through Joseph, Israel was kept secure in Egypt at the same time that it became a medium of blessing for the "the people of all the earth."[4] It was God who sent Joseph to Egypt "to preserve many people alive."[5] Not only many people, including Israel, were kept from starvation in the time of of famine through God's special dealings with Joseph,

---

[1]Gen 15:17; 17:2, 7.

[2]See Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:165-175.

[3]A History of Israel, p. 91. See also Smith "Covenant and Law in Exodus," p. 34.

[4]Gen 41:57.

[5]Gen 50:20.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

but the sojourn in Egypt saved Israel itself from the danger of being absorbed by other peoples before it could be established as a people among the nations.[1] In Egypt they were secure in this respect, "because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews"[2] since "every shepherd is loathsome /an abomination, margin/ to the Egyptians."[3] Moreover, the land of Canaan was too large for a single family to occupy, and the lengthy sojourn in Egypt would allow time for them to develop into a nation, numerous enough to take possession of the land.[4]

Why the Exodus

The historical character of the Exodus is almost universally accepted by Biblical scholars today, in the sense that Israel's forebearers descended to Egypt, sojourned there, and finally, under special circumstances,

---

[1]See the Shechem-Dinah episode in Gen 34.

[2]Gen 43:22

[3]Gen 46:34. See Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation," pp. 145, 146.

[4]In Exod 12:27, 38 the number of the people leaving Egypt is given as "six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. And a mixed multitude also went up with them," suggesting a total population of several millions. For a discussion on the difficulties of these numbers, see Cole, Exodus, p. 112; A. Lucas, "The Number of the Israelites at the Exodus," PEQ (1944): 164-168, and J. W. Wenham, "Large Numbers in the Old Testament," TyndB 18 (1967):19-53.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

left Egypt to establish themselves in Palestine.[1] Although no known Egyptian record attests to the presence of Israel there, the Biblical tradition *a priori* demands belief, because "it is not the sort of tradition any people would invent. Here is no heroic epic of migration, but the recollection of shameful servitude from which only the power of God brought deliverance."[2] Not all agree, however, regarding the date, location, participants, nature, and purpose of the event.[3]

The account of Israel's slavery in Egypt, with

---

[1]"No one today seriously questions that there was a bondage and an Exodus. In its basic outlines as well as in a number of details the story of the enslavement of Israel's ancestors in Egypt accords with much that we know of conditions and features of life in the Nile delta region in the latter part of the second millennium B.C." (Ernest W. Nicholson, Exodus and Sinai in History and Tradition /Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973/, pp. 53, 54).

[2]Bright, A History of Israel, p. 119. For a contrary view, see William Johnstone, "The Exodus as Process," ExpTim 91 (1980):358-363. Johnstone's thesis is that the Exodus narrative as it now stands represents a theological interpretation of a historical process typical over an extended period of time for a large number of people. He argues that from the Egyptian point of view, the narrative represents a gross oversimplification. Egypt at that time was at the zenith of imperial might, yet the Biblical record does not even trouble to give the names of the three Pharaohs that were involved, or mention any of its brilliant achievements, but underlines only its cruelty and intransigence. The biased presentation of the facts, according to Johnstone, suggests that the presentation of the Israelite side is doubtless no less stylized.

[3]Little attention is paid by liberation theologians regarding these aspects of the Exodus, since they are not relevant to their concerns. The oppressed could have been any group and their oppressors could have been

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which Exodus begins, is presented as a part of a continuing story which goes back to the patriarchs in Genesis. The Exodus story clearly comes in the context of the call, blessing, and covenant with Abraham, as a further development of salvation history, i.e., the working out in history of God's salvific purposes.[1] For this reason, the historical context provided by the book of Genesis can hardly be ignored. The Exodus is a chapter of a larger story that began in Eden, ran through many centuries which show how humanity separated from God, tried in vain "to save" itself, and how God, in his mercy, intervened time and time again to stem the tide of evil, until history is given a unique redemptive thrust with the call of Abraham, and the covenant established with him and his posterity.[2]

---

of any kind, and liberation could have taken place at any time or place. See Kirk, Liberation Theology, p. 96.

[1]"Salvation history," a translation of the German *Heilsgeschichte*, which was coined in the middle of the eighteenth century to call attention to the fact that historical events narrated in the Bible were accompanied by a theological purpose. More recently the idea of *Heilsgeschichte* has been used to overcome the dilemma into which historicism has brought the theologians. When the principles and methods of modern scientific research were applied to the Bible, it was reduced to a purely human work sharing the relativism of all the rest of history. See Braaten, History and Hermeneutics, pp. 103-129. Some theologians, like Tillich, Brunner, Bultmann and his school, have shown little interest in the historical contents of the Bible. Other scholars in reaction to this trend have again turned to *Heilsgeschichte*. See Oscar Cullmann, Salvation in History (London: SCM Press, 1967), and James Peter, "Salvation History as a Model for Theological Thought," SJT 23 (1970):1-12.

[2]It is when the Exodus is severed from its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The book of Exodus portrays, in its opening verses, a deliberate connection with the closing chapters of Genesis.[1] It begins with the words "now these are the names. . . ." The initial "now" or "and" found in the Hebrew makes clear that the Exodus is intended as a continuation of the Genesis story and as the fulfillment of the promises made to the patriarchs. Then it proceeds to give the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob as they are found in Genesis 46. It goes on to record how this handful of people, the sons of Israel, "were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them."[2] This seems to be a conscious reference to the promise given to the patriarchs.

---

historical context that it is seen as a paradigm for the liberation of one people from the oppression of another, in order to provide the oppressed the opportunity to work out their own destiny on earth. But when this is done, when the establishing of a society free from misery and alienation, "a human and brotherly city" (Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 157), is the only or main goal of liberation, the Exodus is placed in the central context of Cain and the antedeluvians, or Babel, rather than in the context of Abraham and his descendants, and leaves man free to erect another human kingdom on earth. See Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation," p. 147.

[1]The prelude to the entire book is chapter one, which records in a few verses the history of some hundreds of years. See Benjamin Uffenheimer, "Salvation in Exodus" Risk 9 (1973):28. Interestingly, there is no reference to Exodus 1:1-8 in Gutiérrez' A Theology of Liberation. The same is true of Miranda in Marx and the Bible.

[2]It was by God's special blessing and protection that the sons of Israel became so numerous in Egypt, as the rest of the chapter indicates. It was, besides, the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Even a cursory reading of the first chapters of the Book of Exodus makes it clear that God was on the side of Israel and against Egypt;[1] it also suggests two main reasons for this attitude: God's sensitivity to injustice, and Israel's peculiar character.

God's Sensitivity to Injustice

After many years of living peacefully in Goshen, "the best of the land of Egypt,[2] in which the sons of Israel increased greatly,[3] their fate suddenly changed when "a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know

---

fulfillment of the divine promise first recorded in Gen 1:28 renewed after the flood (Gen 9:1) and again to Abraham (Gen 12:2). Just prior to leaving Canaan with his family to join Joseph in Egypt, the promise of a numerous posterity was repeated to Jacob: "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there (Gen 46:3). Exod 1:7 repeats three verbs found in Gen 1:21, 22; the unusual increase in numbers under adverse circumstances was doubtless interpreted as God's promised blessing on his creation.

[1]"Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burden of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage" (6:6). "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all my miracles which I will do in the midst of it" (3:20).

[2]Gen 45:18.

[3]Exod 1:7. Brevard S. Childs rightly observes that this verse "functions as a transitional verse by pointing in both directions. It serves as a fulfillment of the patriarchal promise of the past, but now forms the background for the events that initiate the exodus" (The Book of Exodus. A Critical Theological Commentary /Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974/, pp. 2, 3).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Joseph,"[1] and saw the Hebrews' rapid increase as a threat to the security of his kingdom. Three attempts were made to curb their expansion: forced labor,[2] a secret plan to murder the male children as they were born,[3] and finally

---

[1]The expression "a new king" is generally understood to imply that he did not succeed his predecessor in a natural way. And the fact that he "did not know Joseph" would strongly imply a new dynasty. The new king was unacquainted with the privileged history of Israel. He felt not bound to the Israelites by any ties of gratitude for what Joseph had done for Egypt, unmindful of the fact that in the person of Joseph Israel had been the salvation of Egypt. At any rate, there was a notable change in the principles of government. See Francis D. Nichol, ed., The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 7 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-1957), 1:496-497. Childs, however, argues that it is a mistake to try to bring this vague reference of the new king who did not know Joseph into "sharper focus by learned discussion of Egyptian history" (The Book of Exodus, p. 15). The question itself, however, has no direct consequence in relation to the theology of the book of Exodus. For a fuller discussion, see Charles F. Pfeiffer, Egypt and the Exodus (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964), chap. 3, "A Pharaoh who Knew not Joseph," pp. 33-39.

[2]It is not altogether clear how the Egyptians expected enforced labor to slow down the expansion of the Hebrews. At any rate, it would seem clear that Pharaoh at least hoped to achieve his goal by breaking down the physical strength of the slaves, since a population grows more slowly under conditions of oppression than in the midst of prosperous circumstances. At the same time their spirits would be crushed, thus destroying their very desire for liberation. Topel points out that in Brazil and Cuba the technique of lengthening the hours of work was actually used to control the slave population (The Way to Peace, p. 158).

[3]Severino Croatto sees the effort to keep in check the growth in the number of slaves through infanticide as equivalent to "the euphemism of 'family planning' orchestrated by the North Americans" (Exodus, p. 18). On the role the midwives played as they disobeyed the king, see Childs, The Book of Exodus, pp. 16, 17.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

open drowning in the Nile.[1] When these cruel methods failed in their intended objective, the rigor of the oppression succeeded in making the lives of the Hebrews bitter and almost unbearable; they were slaves, at the mercy of an unscrupulous king.[2] In their desperate situation they cried and God heard their cry. He "saw" the affliction of his people; he "heard" their cry because of their taskmasters, and "was aware" of their sufferings, so he "came down" to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians.[3]

The Exodus story portrays Egypt as the oppressor and God as responding to the cry of the oppressed. The Exodus, therefore, was an act of justice, whereby the oppressed were freed and the oppressors punished. The story begins with the cry of the Israelites, but ends with the cry on the lips of the Egyptians " . . . and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead."[4]

---

[1]Exod 1:22.

[2]Exod 1:14. See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 156. Croatto, in his unconcealed anti-North American feelings, again draws a parallel with modern times: "It was an alienating situation in extreme like, in our time, to the shameful situation of the Puerto Ricans exploited at all levels by their masters. All exploitation is characterized by an ignominious, arrogant arbitrariness, whether it is exercised by a pharaoh or by the imperialist countries of our own day" (Exodus, p. 16).

[3]Exod 3:7, 8.

[4]Exod 12:30. See Goldingay, "The Man of War," p. 85.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the Exodus God acted in deep solidarity with those who suffered to deliver them from a state of servitude and to set them free. Liberation theologians are very perceptive in emphasizing the need for social justice and concern for the poor in their reading of the Exodus. Ronald Sider has clearly stated that

> At the exodus, God acted to demonstrate that he is opposed to oppression. We distort the biblical interpretation of the momentous event of the exodus unless we see that at this pivotal point, the Lord of the universe was at work correcting oppression and liberating the poor. 1

In fact, God's concern for the weak and the oppressed permeates the pages of the Old Testament; "the protection of the innocent and the poor in society is the very warp and woof of the Israelite way of life."[2] The disenfranchised, the destitute, the disabled, the widow, the orphans and sojourners are singled out in the Old Testament as worthy of special consideration by God's people.[3] The Israelites were to follow the example of

---

[1]"An Evangelical Theology of Liberation," Kenneth Kantzer and Stanley Gundry, eds., Perspectives on Evangelical Theology. Papers from the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 121.

[2]G. Johannes Botterweck, *"ebhyon,"* Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 31; see entire article pp. 27-42. See also Ronald J. Sider, ed., Cry Justice The Bible Speaks on Hunger and Poverty (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1980). This book contains a convenient compilation of Biblical texts dealing with hunger, justice, and the poor.

[3]"Cursed is he who distorts the justice due

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yahweh, who took their side when they were poor and helpless. Justice in dealing with others, especially with the weak, was to be uppermost in their concerns; it was to be a sign of their knowledge of God,[1] as Jeremiah expressed it:

> Did not your father eat and drink
> and do justice and righteousness?
> Then it was well with him.
> He plead the cause of the afflicted and needy;
> Then it was well.
> Is it not that what it means to know Me?
> Declares the Lord. 2

---

to an alien, orphan, and widow" (Deut 27:19). For a fuller discussion of this topic see Norman W. Proteous, "The Care of the Poor in the Old Testament," in Living the Mystery. Collected Essays (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967): pp. 143-155); H. Eberhard Von Waldow, "Social Responsibility and Social Structure in Early Israel," CBQ 32 (1970:182-204, and David H. Engelhard, "The Lord's Motivated Concern for the Underprivileged," CalThJ 15 (1980):5-26.

[1]It should be pointed out that in these concerns the Israelites were not unique; they shared much in common with their neighbors. "The protection of the widow, the orphan and the poor was the common policy of the Ancient Near East" (Charles Fensham, "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature," JNES 21 /1962/:129). The main difference between Israel and most of her neighbors, according to Engelhard, was that while in Egypt and Mesopotamia the concern for the underprivileged was the ideal of the rulers, and only by implication the duty of the people, in Israel the law, the prophets, and the wisdom sayings were addressed to all people, corporately and individually ("The Lord's Motivated Concern," p. 13).

[2]Jer 22:15. There is a tendency among liberation theologians to stress the concept of doing justice as *the* way of knowing God. Gutiérrez writes, "to oppress the poor is to offend God himself; to know God is to work justice among men" (A Theology of Liberation, p. 295). Miranda is more specific when he declares that God's "*sole* concern was with justice for the oppressed" (Marx and the Bible, p. 84, emphasis added); and again "Yahweh's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

God's Dependability in a Covenant Relationship

The liberation of the Israelites from Egypt was an act of justice in which God freed the oppressed and punished the oppressor. Unfortunately, most liberation theologians see this as the only aspect of God's mighty act. On this point José Porfirio Miranda is unambiguous:

> The God who originally revealed himself to Israel was the God of the Exodus, and his self-revelation is simply an obligatory intervention on behalf of the oppressed against the oppressor. 1

On this account liberation theologians overlook the

---

intervention in history has only one purpose . . . . 'to serve the cause of justice'" (p. 78). Consequently, he concludes, "to know God is to achieve justice for the poor" (p. 44). No one would seriously argue, on Biblical grounds, that to know God should inevitably result in seeking to do justice. Donald G. Bloesch, however, argues, and rightly so, that "the knowing of God" and the "doing of justice" cannot be equated, for the simple reason that many who have been illuminated by the knowledge of God are unable to participate visibly and meaningfully in the quest for social justice. "I am thinking here," he says, "of the Jewish people in exile in Babylon or of the Christian community in certain Iron Curtain countries whose witness is the silent one of intercession and daily suffering and humiliation. In such cases believers are barred from positions of responsibility in the state where they could participate in the political process that serves the cause of justice" (ThEd 16 /1979/: 16). Since these terms cannot be equated, much less reversed, as when Míguez Bonino, going a step further states, "to do justice *is* to know Yahweh" (Christians and Marxists, p. 53), especially when to "do justice" implies to give room to another regime tham promises to be more interested in the common good.

[1]Being and the Messiah. The Message of St. John (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1977), p. 30. He adds, "the exegesis which tries to make his intervention depend completely on a promise or pact--as if God would not have intervened against injustice if he had not officially promised to do so beforehand--contradicts with this kind of positivism the deepest and most radical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

principal motive of God's action: the peculiar character of the relation that united Him to Israel; he acted to fulfill his promises to Abraham, to reveal his will and to call out a special people. The concept of the covenant is present in Gutiérrez, but for him it is not the calling out of a particular people, but rather "a movement which led to encounter with God."[1]

However, God not only heard the groaning of an enslaved people, he also "remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."[2] The God of the Exodus was one and the same as "the God of your fathers."[3] Walter Eichrodt rightly points out that there can be no real

---

conviction of the Old Testament authors" (Marx and the Bible, p. 89).

[1]A Theology of Liberation, p. 157. He denies the role of a particular people, preferring instead a "purely relational and general encounter theology," which does not do justice to the role of the covenant in Israel (Armerding, "Exodus," p. 531).

[2]Exod 2:24; 6:4, 5. The doctrine of election is fundamental to the thought of the Old Testament; it is in fact the characteristic doctrine in Genesis: God choosing Shem from the three sons of Noah (Gen 9); then Abraham to be the father of the chosen nation (Gen 12); God passing by Ishmael and choosing Isaac (Gen 21); then passing by Esau and choosing Jacob (Gen 25; later appointing Joseph from among his twelve brothers (Gen 37); and finally the passing by of the elder of Joseph's sons and bestowal of the firstborn's portion on Ephraim (Gen 48).

[3]Exod 3:13, 15, 16; 4:5; 13:11. The names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are mentioned seven times in the first four chapter of Exodus. See on this topic Frank Moore Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," HThR 55 (1962):225-259.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

understanding of the meaning of the Old Testament, unless close attention is paid to the doctrine of election, regardless of what one might think about its truth: "For biblical religion this means that one cannot pass over the central concept that God bears a special relationship to His people, a relationship appropriately designated by the words 'covenant' and 'election.'"[1]

It is by virtue of the special relationship that God had with *these* slaves, the descendants of Abraham, with whom he made a covenant, that Yahweh found the reason to assist them in their affliction. There were, no doubt, other peoples in the ancient world, even within the confines of Egypt itself, who groaned under their bondage and cried to heaven like the Israelites did. But they were not the object of the same favor; because of his covenant with their fathers, Yahweh responded only to the cry of the Israelites.[2] Israel found favor with

---

[1]Quoted by H. H. Rowley, The Biblical Doctrine of Election (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950), p. 15.

[2]Exod 11:5 indicates that during the last plague, even "the first-born of the *slave-girl* who is behind the millstones" would die. To sit "behind the two mill stones," as the Hebrew literally reads, is to do the work of the lowest woman slave in the household. According to Umberto Cassuto, the expression means "the poorest of the poor" (A Commentary on the Book of Exodus /Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1967/, p. 133). The sighs of these slaves, "the poorest of the poor," were apparently not heard by Yahweh; rather they participated in the judgment of the oppressor. This does not mean that God had no ears for their cry, only that He had decided to bless them through His covenant people, because the same covenant with the fathers does

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

God not only because she cried in her affliction, but because she was "His" people: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt."[1] The special relationship between God and His people, the children of Israel, is highlighted by the words "Israel is My son, My first-born."[2] While Israel carefully avoided the idea of divine sonship,[3] it is God who uses this expression as an integral part of His call to deliver Israel from Egypt. This text does not mean, as it is often implied, that Yahweh called Israel from Egypt to *be* his son. Israel was *already* Yahweh's son in Egypt. Yahweh was now seen as a "Father" for what He did. He brought Israel into being as a nation; He fostered it and led it. These words express a very close, familial relationship, where the highest degree of loyalty may be expected of the

---

link Israel to the rest of the world. He had promised to bless Abraham in a special way, but one of the objects of his blessing was that "in you all families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

[1]Exod 3:7.

[2]Exod 4:22, 23. This is the only passage in the Old Testament in which Israel is referred to as the first-born. Jeremiah uses the word referring to Ephraim (31:9). See Phillip Hyatt, Commentary on Exodus, New Century Bible (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott Ltd., 1971), p. 86.

[3]It was common in the Ancient Near East for monarchs to claim that they were sons of the gods, especially so in Egypt where the Pharaoh was thought to be the result of sexual union between the god and the queen. Perhaps this is the reason why Israel carefully avoided the idea of divine sonship. See Dennis McCarthy, "Israel, My First-born Son," The Way 5 (1965):183-191.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

protector. The idea is present that "the Israelites are thought less as slaves to be rescued by a relation than as property withheld from its original owner and to be regained by him."[1]

The liberative action of God in favor of His "Son" is expressed as redemption: "I will also *redeem* you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments."[2] To redeem, *ga'al*, is a juridical term which basically means to recover a lost property[3] and is very similar in

---

[1]David Daube, The Exodus Pattern in the Bible (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 42. In his final speech to the Israelites, forty years after their liberation, Moses reminded them, "Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you" (Deut 32:6). The attribute "firstborn" is also a basis for the threat to the firstborn of Pharaoh. If Pharaoh would refuse to let God's firstborn go, then his firstborn must die instead. This connection is patterned on the *lex talionis*, a fundamental principle of the Hebrew law (Exod 21:23-25). See Cole, Exodus, p. 78.

[2]Exod 6:6. Apart from this passage the stem "to redeem" occurs only once in the Exodus story (Exod 15:2). Thus, from the strict linguistic point of view the concept of redemption would appear to be only marginal in the book of Exodus. Yet it contains "the enthusiastic narrative of a nation's redemption from the bonds of slavery by the intervention of God followed by the free decision of a whole people to accept this kingship as the formative principle of its national existence, pervading and shaping all spheres of life" (Benjamin Uffenheimer, "Salvation in Exodus" Risk 9:3 /1973/:27). The idea of redemption is, of course, present earlier than the Exodus in the stories of Noah (Gen 8) and Lot (Gen 19).

[3]The term *ga'al* is used in two different realms in the Old Testament. One the one hand, it is used in connection with legal and social life, and on the other hand, with regard to God's redeeming acts. In the secular use the verb describes the action of someone who has the right to reclaim a person or a thing by virtue of the special bond that unites him to that person or thing.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meaning to such verbs as "release," "rescue," "liberate." In this context, the application of this term to the liberation of Israel is closely related to restoration of an earlier relationship between Yahweh and Israel, especially so since the author mentions in the previous verses the patriarchs with whom he had already made a covenant.[1] Yahweh's special interest in his firstborn became evident

---

"If a fellow-countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold" (Lev 25:25); if "a countryman of yours becomes so poor . . . as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you . . . then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him" (Lev 25:47, 48). Widows without children could also be redeemed by one of the husband's nearest relatives (Ruth 3, 4). Nuances from the legal and social realm play a role in the religious, as evidenced in Ps 74:2: "Remember Thy congregation, which Thou has purchased of old, which Thou hast redeemed to be the tribe of Thine inheritance." For more details, see Helmer Ringgren, *"ga'al"* Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 2:350-355.

[1]It would seem, therefore, that the term "redemption" should be preferred over "liberation" to express what actually happened at the Exodus, because "el concepto bíblico es esencialmente positivo e indica más el pertenecer a Dios que el dejar de pertenecer al faraón. Sólo que el pertenecer a Dios implica dejar de pertenecer al faraón; Dios no es Señor de un pueblo de esclavos" (Correa, "Leyendo el Exodo y a Gutiérrez," p. 91). Therefore, when the term "liberation is used today to refer to the "archetypical event" of the Exodus, the basic meaning expressed by *ga'al* should not be emptied. Jorge Mejía concludes that the term "liberation" is not central in the Bible to designate the work of God on behalf of man, and when used in the Bible it does not mean what it generally means in today's usage. See "La liberación. Aspectos bíblicos: Evaluación crítica," in Liberación: Diálogos en el CELAM (Bogotá: Secretariado General del CELAM, 1974), pp. 304, 305. So does James Barr: "it must be clear that the Exodus theme is not obviously a 'liberation,' in the common sense, as has

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the events that followed. When Pharaoh persistently refused to yield to Yahweh's demands, His judgments fell with increasing severity on Pharaoh, his people, and his possessions; while the land of Goshen enjoyed His protections, according to His promise: "I will put a division between My people and your people."[1]

It is evident that the oppressed that are being redeemed in the Exodus event are God's chosen people, the people with whom Yahweh has a covenant, Israel. Yahweh acted in regard to His people in a unique way not equaled with respect to any other nation. "He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. *He has not dealt thus with any nation,*"[2] declares the psalmist.

In view of the specific teaching of Scripture concerning the particularity of God's people evidenced in the Exodus narrative and elsewhere in the sacred record, one is led to conclude that it is a particular hermeneutical pre-understanding that does not allow liberation theologians to perceive it.[3] One cannot pass over the

---

commonly been supposed, on the basis of Old Testament evidence" ("The Bible as a Political Document," BJRL 62 /1980/:287).

[1]Exod 8:23.

[2]Ps 147:19, 20. Yoder forcefully argues that *Goshen is prior to Exodus*; "peoplehood is the presupposition, not the product of Exodus" ("Exodus and Exile," p. 301).

[3]Marten H. Woudstra, "A Critique of Liberation Theology by a Cross-Culturalized Calvinist," JETS 23 (1980):11.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

central Biblical affirmation that God bears a special relationship to His people--a relationship appropriately designated by the words "covenant," "election,"--and still hope to grasp the meaning and message of God's word for us today.

Purpose of the Exodus

To Reveal God's Initiative

The necessity of man's participation in his own salvation, exemplified by Moses' role in the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt, is seen as one of the primary features of the Exodus story by many liberation theologians.[1] Moses is often conceived as a revolutionary leader who led the Hebrew slaves in a successful revolt against Egypt, and then fled with them to Palestine.

The fact that in the present state of the story the participation of Moses and the people do not figure prominently, is because the Jews, once liberated, engaged in a prolongued interpretation of their own history, in the process of which the importance of the human role was largely reversed, to the extent that Yahweh, rather than Moses and the people, occupies the center stage.[2] It would seem strange, as Bright rightly points out, that

---

[1]See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 156; Miranda, Marx and the Bible, pp. 97, 98; Croatto, Liberación y libertad, pp. 42, 43.

[2]See Croatto, "Dios en el acontecimiento," p. 54.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

any people would invent such a tradition of a shameful servitude from which only the power of God brought deliverance, had they been successful in gaining their freedom.[1] It would seem, however, that an essential element of the story is that the Exodus was an act of God rather than man. The involvement of Moses in the liberative enterprise underlines, from the very beginning, the fact that the Exodus is of God's doing.

It is significant in the story that Moses, who belonged to the oppressed but had providentially been brought up among the oppressors, one day went out to see his brethren in their hard labors. Upon noticing that an Egyptian, perhaps one of the taskmasters, was beating a Hebrew, acting with utmost care "he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."[2] It is evident that Moses possessed the qualities of a revolutionary leader. Cassuto points out that

> By this act Moses showed the qualities of his spirit, the spirit of a man who pursues justice and is quick to save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor,

---

[1]Bright, A History of Israel, p. 119.

[2]Exod 2:13. Miranda rightly points out that the phrase "to see" in the previous verse means more than the ordinary act of seeing; it intends action, as when God "saw" the affliction of his people and "came down" to deliver them. Marx and the Bible, pp. 97, 98. The Egyptian was "beating" the Hebrew, and Moses "struck down" the Egyptian are forms of the same verb. Moses' act was an act of justice; the Egyptian smote; therefore, he too should be smitten. However, the verb is repeated with a somewhat different nuance: when first used it means "to beat"; the second time it signifies "to kill." See Cassuto, Commentary on Exodus, p. 22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the spirit of love of freedom and courage to rise up against tyrants. 1

Whatever the interpretation concerning the nature of Moses' act or his qualities as a revolutionary leader might be[2]—the Bible does not pronounce any judgment on the morality of his action--one thing is certain: he failed in his self-appointed mission; failed in keeping his crime secret, as well as in winning the allegiance of those on whose behalf he acted. As soon as he knew that Pharaoh was after his life, he was seized by fear, fled the country,[3] and settled in Midian.[4]

---

[1]Commentary on Exodus, p. 22.

[2]The history of the interpretation of this passage reveals that some commentators saw his action with approval, while others saw it as a crime that should not be excused. According to John Calvin, Moses "was inspired by the Holy Spirit with special courage for the performance of this act" (Commentary on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony /Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950/, 1:47). For Augustine, however, the Egyptian, though criminal and really the offender, ought not to have been put to death by one who had no legal authority to do so" (Quoted by Keil, Commentary on the Old Testament, 1:431). For more details on the history of exegesis of this passage, see Childs, The Book of Exodus, pp. 40, 41.

[3]Exod 1:13-14. There is no doubt that the guerilla tactics Moses proposed to employ were not part of the Divine strategy. It was not by insurrection on their part nor by a system of assassination that the Hebrews were to be delivered from their bondage. The incident reveals that the leader was not yet prepared, nor were the Hebrews themselves ready to leave Egypt.

[4]Not many details are given of Moses' stay in Midian. Upon reaching there, however, opportunity presented itself for Moses to again manifest his active concern for justice on behalf of the weak (2:16, 17), as well as his prowess as a warrior: he singlehandedly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In killing the offender and defending the abused Hebrew, Moses had acted out of concern for justice, out of compassion, out of concern for the oppression of his people, but he acted without authority; "his zeal for the welfare of his brethren urged him forward to present himself as the umpire and judge of his brethren before God called him to this."[1] By acting on behalf of justice, but without authority, Moses had to act secretly rather than openly, whereas the Exodus is concerned that justice be publicly done.[2]

The opening chapters of the book of Exodus present Israel in such a desperate situation that it provokes the violent intervention of Moses: but his action is fruitless, and serves only to bring to prominence the indispensability of God's involvement if the slaves are to be freed. This in no way detracts from the fact that Moses is a towering figure in the book of Exodus. His greatness, however, is not that of a general, or a

---

stood up and helped the girls against the shepherds. This act earned him acceptance in a new community and a wife, and the name given to his firstborn, Gershom, indicates that Moses still remembered that he was a sojourner in a foreign land. On the background of Moses' sojourn in Midian, See George W. Coats, "Moses in Midian," JBL 92 (1973):3-10.

[1]Kiel, Commentary on the Old Testament, 1:431.

[2]See Goldingay, "The Man of War and the Suffering Servant," p. 90. Childs is perceptive when he observes that it is doubtful whether an act of justice can really be done under the circumstances Moses acted. The Book of Exodus, p. 45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

guerilla strategist, but of an ambassador who returns to Egypt in the name of Yahweh, with a new mission and a different authority. For this task he was to be called.

One day, as Moses was pasturing the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian came to Horeb, the mountain of God, where he was confronted by the God of his fathers in the magnificent symbols of the burning bush,[1] the holy ground and the divine name: "*'Ehyeh asher 'ehyeh.*"[2] Buber has interestingly observed that this verse (Exod 3:14) answers a question posed by Moses in the previous verse: "Then Moses said to God, Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them the God of your fathers has sent me to you. Now they may say to me, *what* is his name,"[3] and argues that "what" as distinguished from "who" seeks out the qualities, character, power and abilities resident in that name. What is God really like? is what the question implies.[4] Accordingly, God's answer *'Ehyeh asher 'ehyeh,*

---

[1]See on this event David Noel Freedman, "The Burning Bush," Bib 50 (1969):245-246: Edward J. Young, "The Call of Moses," WTJ 29 (1967):117-135 and 30 (1968):1-23, and Martin Buber, Moses, the Revelation and the Covenant (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), chap. 4, "The Burning Bush," pp. 39-55.

[2]Exod 3:14. The majority of liberation theologians who deal with this passage understand it in a future sense, "I will be who I will be." See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 165; Miranda, Being and the Messiah, pp. 42,43.

[3]Exod 3:13.

[4]Moses, the Revelation and the Covenant, pp. 51, 52.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was not so much an ontological designation as it was a promise of a dynamic, active presence. The name of God must, according to the context, justify God's mission to deliver Israel as well as guarantee its success. He had already assured Moses "I will be with you."[1] The revelation of His name was intended to remove any doubt from peoples' minds that this God, who was active in the history of their fathers, would be capable of achieving their own liberation. Furthermore, this would seem to fit the Biblical pattern, for in Israel's subsequent history, God would be known as the God who brought Israel "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."[2]

God's manifestation was in a supernatural, miraculous event, the first in a series of supernatural events that characterize the Exodus story, underlining the fact that the Exodus was interpreted to be the work of God.[3] When the divine call came from the burning bush, "come now, I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring

---

[1]Exod 3:12.

[2]Exod 20:2. See on this topic David Noel Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," JBL 79 (1960):151-156; Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 151, 152, and Childs, The Book of Exodus, pp. 60-77.

[3]Among others, the rod made serpent and turned back again (4:2-4); Moses' hand diseased and then healed (9:6, 7); the plagues (7-12); the slaughter of the Egyptian first-born (2:29); the crossing of the Red Sea (14); the destruction of the Egyptian army (14); the pillar of fire and cloud (14:19); sweetening of the waters of Marah (15:22-25); manna and quail provided for food (16); water flowing from the rock (17:1-6).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt,"[1] Moses could not believe that God wanted to involve him in the liberative enterprise. A marked contrast is observed in Moses now, unwilling to accept the divine commission, with the potential revolutionary that some years before "supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him."[2] He was assured that the success of his mission was not dependent on his own abilities or power, but rather in being a messenger of the God of his fathers, "certainly I will be with you, and this shall be a sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God upon this mountain."[3] As Moses in disbelief argues that the Hebrews will not listen to him, he is empowered to perform three miraculous acts to substantiate his claim to be Yahweh's messenger, and to convince them that the God of their fathers was about to fulfill His promises.

According to Gutiérrez, the task of Moses and

---

[1]Exod 3:10.

[2]Acts 7:25. Moses had been trained at the court of Pharaoh; he "was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians . . ." (Acts 7:22), and more than any other Hebrew, he was highly qualified to be God's agent of deliverance. But his present sense of inadequacy, also seen in other prophets (Isa 6:5; Jer 1:6), contrasts sharply with his previous experience. The sense of inadequacy and weakness is no ordinary part of the equipment of the potential political leader.

[3]Exod 3:12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aaron in Egypt was one of conscientization of the oppressed, because liberation is not possible before the oppressed reject the oppressive consciousness which they have internalized, and decide to take charge of their own destiny. It would seem however, that by performing wonders that altogether transcended the skill and wisdom of man, the Israelites were expected to trust in the supernatural power of the God of their fathers, rather than to be moved to organize themselves in an attempt to gain their freedom. The purpose of the signs was to convince them of the perfect ease with which God could do anything that the accomplishment of their liberation would demand. At any rate, Israel needed a more radical conscientization than the one suggested by Gutiérrez; it needed not only to become aware of its condition as unreasonable and that it could be changed. It needed a renewed awareness of itself as God's people and of Yahweh as its God.

Moses finally returned to Egypt to interpret what had happened to him on the holy mountain to those who were in Egypt, Hebrews as well as Egyptians. And it was exclusively Yahweh who multiplied signs and wonders against the obstinate Pharaoh,[1] guided Israel by the

---

[1]Exod 7-12. The narrative uses the terminology of the miraculous throughout. The principal words employed are *pala*, "miracle" (3:20); *oth*, "sign" (4:8,17); *mopheth*, "wonder" (4:21); *shephot*, "judgment" (6:6). The divine power at work is expressed by such terms as "by a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pillar of fire and cloud,[1] and won the final and decisive victory at the Red Sea,[2] while Moses' chief responsibility

---

strong hand" 3:19, margin); "My hand" (3:20); "the hand of the Lord" (9:3); "by a powerful hand" (13:3); "outstretched hand" (6:6); "finger of God" (8:19); "My power" (9:16).

[1]Exod 12:21, 22. Was the pillar of cloud a purely supernatural manifestation, or was it a natural object used by God as a symbol of his presence and leadership? Cassuto argues, for instance, that just as caravan guides in the wilderness were accustomed to carry in front of them certain signals to guide their caravans in the right direction--smoke signals by day and fire signals by night--so it is narrated in the Exodus account how the Lord guided Israel. Commentary on Exodus, p. 158. There is no indication however, that Israel ever had such practice. According to Martin Noth the narrative element of the pillars of cloud and fire in all probability derives from the Sinai tradition, being imaginative extensions of the column of smoke and fire raising from an erupting volcano. Exodus. A Commentary (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 109. For a more complete study of different attempted explanations, see Thomas W. Mann, "The Pillar of Cloud in the Red Sea Narrative," JBL (1971):15-30.

[2]Exod 14. Is the narrative to be taken as an accurate account of a historical miraculous deliverance, or as a fanciful legend? The trend in contemporary criticism tends to take a middle position between these two "extremes," to consider the account basically accurate but the natural phenomena involved entirely explicable according to the laws of science. See Thomas Soltis, "Scientific Theology and the Miracle at the Red Sea," Spfdr 38 (1974):55-59; Lewis S. Hay, "What Really Happened at the Sea of Reeds?" JBL 83 (1964):397-403. In this effort, some little convincing explanations are put forth, as the one offered by Topel: "This miracle /the crossing of the Sea/ could be explained by natural phenomena. The Hebrews, lightly dressed, could wade through the shallow Reed Sea. The Egyptian chariots would have sunk in the water and their heavy armor would have caused the men to drown" (The Way to Peace, p 158). Hans Goldicke, an Egyptologist at John Hopkins University, in a book to be published later this year, has advanced the theory that it was a tidal wave, triggered by an erupting volcano that parted the waves of the Red Sea at the Exodus and swallowed the pursuing Egyptians. According to Goldicke, the Exodus rescue was linked with the same

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

seems to have been to maneuver the Israelites into a position between the Egyptians and the sea from which only Yahweh's aid could extricate them."[1]

> Moses said to the people, Do not fear: Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which he will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you have seen today you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent. 2

The crossing of the Red Sea does not glorify Moses' strategy, but the sufficiency of Yahweh. He alone is capable to deliver His people. The narrative "is unanimous in stressing that the rescue was accomplished through the intervention of God and God alone. He had provided a way of escape when there was no hope."[3] A belief so ancient and so entrenched in the history of Israel clearly points to the reality of Israel's escape from Egypt under events that were impressed forever in its memory. And as Bright says, "If Israel saw in this the hand of God, the historian certainly has no evidence

---

volcanic eruption on the island of Thera that wiped out the Minoan civilization just before 1475 B.C. See Evangelical Newsletter (May 19, 1981).

[1]Robert F. Johnson, "Moses," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:445.

[2]Exod 14:13, 14.

[3]Childs, The Book of Exodus, p. 237. Even Noth, in discussing the E and J sources of the account, admits that "in both cases, however, the sole initiative in the events which now begin clearly remains with Yahweh himself" (Exodus, p. 41).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to contradict it."[1] Yet in the Exodus story, the wilderness wandering, and the giving of the land, Yahweh's delivering action includes not only the supernatural, but the use of natural forces and elements as well. Childs so well points out that

> The deliverance at the sea was effected by a combination of the wonderful and the ordinary. The waters were split by the rod of Moses, but a strong wind blew all night and laid bare the sea bed. The waters stood up as a mighty wall to the left and to the right, and yet the Egyptians were drowned when the sea returned to its normal channels. Yahweh produced panic with his fiery glance, but it was the mud of the bottom which clogged the wheels of the heavy chariots. The elements of the wonderful and the ordinary are constitutive of the greatest Old Testament events. There never was a time when the event was only understood as ordinary, nor was there a time when the supernatural absorbed the natural. But Israel saw the mighty hand of God at work in both the ordinary and the wonderful, and never sought to fragment the one great act of redemption into parts. 2

According to Exodus 15, where the Israelites broke forth in praise to God for His mighty salvation, Yahweh alone effected the miracle at the sea; they did not even play a minor role. The "warrior" in Exodus is not Moses, but Yahweh.[3] The battle is not between Moses

---

[1] A History of Israel, p. 120. Israel remembered the Exodus event throughout her history as the event that brought her into existence as a people. See Deut 6:20-25; 26:5-9; Joah 242:13.

[2] The Book of Exodus, p. 238.

[3] Exod 15:3. Notably, the figure of Moses is completely ommitted in the song. The liberation had been accomplished by God alone. "Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; the horse and his rider he has hurled into the sea" (15:21). Since Yahweh is the primary actor in the event, it is to Him and not to His human agent that attention is paid. See Childs, The Book of Exodus, pp. 240-253.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and Pharaoh. As John L. McKenzie, the noted Roman Catholic scholar, puts it,

> The paradigmatic character of the exodus can be thus summarized: the need is desperate, and the candidate for salvation is helpless. The power of Yahweh is interposed in such a way that the persons saved need do nothing. 1

The Exodus experience, as Yoder clearly points out, is of one piece with the ancient Hebrew vision of Holy War. These wars were not military operations rationally planned and executed; they were miracles. "The combatant was not a liberation front or a terrorist commando but YHWH himself."[2] The crossing of the Red Sea remained for

---

[1] A Theology of the Old Testament (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1974), p. 145.

[2] "Exodus and Exile," pp. 299-300. For a significant contribution on this theme, see Millard C. Lind, Yahweh Is a Warrior. The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel, Foreword by David Noll Freedman, Introduction by John H. Yoder (Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1980). Lind disagrees with Von Rad and other modern writers who see the emphasis on God's miracle of holy war and downgrade human activity as product of late theological reflection, and argues that Exod 15, due to the fact it is roughly contemporary with the event itself, expresses Israel's original understanding of this formative event in her history.

The claim of God's participation in its battles is not exclusive to Israel, however. Its pagan neighbors also looked upon war as having a sacred character. Assurbanipal, in a nearly Biblical tone, acknowledged that he owed his victories to his gods: "Not by my own power, not by the strength of my bow--but by the power of my gods, by the strength of my goddesses I subjected the lands . . . to the yoke of Assur" (Lind, Yahweh is a Warrior, p. 30). See also James B. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 180-182. But outside of Israel this meant that because the gods fought, the warriors were to fight all the harder. Within Israel, however, the claim was that divine help

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Israelites the sign that their salvation did not depend on their own efforts. In the paradigmatic character of the Exodus, "Yahweh the divine warrior overcame Egypt, not by means of human warfare, but by means of a prophetic personality who heralded a message brought to pass by miracle. There was, indeed, human activity, but it was the action of a prophet, not of a warrior."[1]

The idea of man's "self-generation," so central in Gutiérrez, appears to derive rather from his expositions of modern ideas about man, especially as he expounds Hegel, Marx and Freud,[2] than from a careful exposition of Scripture. Camara admits as much when he says that one of the contributions of Marxism is leading Christians to "rediscover" the concept of man as "co-creator."[3]

To Demonstrate God's Superiority

One major concern of the Exodus, in a fashion

---

made it unnecessary for the warriors to fight. See Patrick D. Miller, Jr., The Divine Warrior in Early Israel (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973); Waldemar Janzen, "War in the Old Testament," MQR 46 (1972):155-166, and Gwilym H. Jones, "Holy War" or "Yahweh War?" VT 25 (1975):642-658.

[1]Lind, Yahweh is a Warrior, p. 24. On the basis of what the record actually says, to claim that the Exodus story contains a clear indication that liberating violence by the oppressed is justified, would seem unwarranted.

[2]A Theology of Liberation, pp. 27-33. The discussion is carried under the heading: "Man, the Master of his Own Destiny." See also Germán Correa, "Leyendo el Exodo y a Gustavo Gutiérrez," Tierra Nueva 7 (1973):92, 93.

[3]"What Would St. Thomas Do," p. 112.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

typical of the Bible, is not only man and his needs, but God and His glory. A stated aim was that oppressors and oppressed alike would acknowledge the superiority of Yahweh above all other gods and give glory to His name.[1] God's confrontation with Pharaoh brought this issue into sharp focus. At the request of Moses and Aaron, that the God of Israel was calling His people to celebrate a feast to Him in the wilderness, the Pharaoh bluntly replied: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go."[2]

God's activity during the Exodus becomes clearer

---

[1]"And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst" (7:5); "By this you shall know that I am the Lord" (7:17); "that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God" (8:10); "so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth" (9:14); "and that you might tell in the hearing of your son . . .; that you may know that I am the Lord" (10:2).

[2]Exod 5:2. Moses and Aaron had already been warned not to expect an easy compliance from the Egyptian monarch, that because of his stubborn refusal, compulsion would become necessary (3:19). Compulsion became necessary due to Pharaoh's "hardness of heart." There are many difficulties connected with this subject. On ethical grounds, it has long been argued that if it is God who hardens the heart of Pharaoh, the latter should not be blamed for it and, consequently, it is unethical for him to suffer retribution. We must remember that the Exodus is not dealing with philosophical issues such as the free will of man and God's foreknowledge. Besides, in the Hebrew way of expressing things, it was customary to attribute every phenomenon to the direct action of God. Of a barren woman, for example, it was said "the Lord had closed her womb" (1 Sam 1:5). See Cassuto, A Commentary on Exodus, pp. 54-57, and Childs, The Book of Exodus, pp. 170-175.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

if we perceive it against the background of Egyptian religion.[1] Even when this is a much debated subject, there is no question that the Egyptians were "the most polytheistic people known from the ancient world."[2] The gods permeated the entire life of the Egyptians, to the extent that "every phenomenon and every process in man's life could be attributed to the agency of gods."[3] The Egyptian religion was also an idolatrous religion,[4] and, as such, it was morally and spiritually degrading. In this sytem "the king of Egypt was a god, the divine principle of rule upon earth."[5] This is why the Exodus was

---

[1]For a brief summary of Egyptian religion see J. A. Wilson, "Egypt," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 2:56-65; John J. Davis, Moses and the Gods of Egypt. Studies in the Book of Exodus (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971); Jaroslav Cerny, Ancient Egyptian Religion (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952); Henri Frankfort, Before Philosophy. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Harmondsworth, D. C., Heath and Co., 1951); and Ancient Egyptian Religion. An Interpretation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948).

[2]Davis, Moses and the Gods of Egypt, p. 86. Estimates indicate that they might have had in the neighborhood of eighty gods (ibid.)

[3]Wilson, "Egypt," p. 56.

[4]The Egyptians considered sacred the lion, the ox, the ram, the wolf, the dog, the cat, the ibis, the vulture, the falcon, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cobra, the dolphin, different fish, trees, small animals including the frog, scarab, locust, etc. They had the inclination for putting the head of birds, animals or other creatures on top of a human torso. (Davis, Moses and the Gods of Egypt, p. 87).

[5]Wilson, "Egypt," p. 59. The king as god was the sole ruler over the people: their wellbeing was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

an act of judgment on the false gods; the real contest was between the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt, Pharaoh being chief among them. The record makes this clear:

> I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment--I am the Lord. 1

The judgments of Yahweh, as embodied in the plagues,[2] surely must have pointed out the impotency of

---

directly associated with that of the king. See Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods. A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 295-312 on the "Deification of Kings."

[1]Exod 12:12. See Bernard Ramm, "The Theology of the Book of Exodus. A Reflection on Exodus 12:12," SWJT 20 (1977):59-68. Even when Exod 12:12 does not mention Pharaoh, it cannot be said that "Pharaoh plays no significant role" (Childs, The Book of Exodus, p. 193). He was not only the ruler of Egypt, but also one of its gods.

[2]Liberal critical scholars generally see the plagues as natural phenomena, perhaps more intense than normal, as Flinders Petrie writes: "June: The Nile becomes stagnant and red, with microscopic organisms. July: Frogs abound after the inundation of the Nile. Hot summer and damp autumn months: lice, flies, murrain and boils. January: hail and rain. (This date fixed by the effect of the crops mentioned.) February: Appearance of locusts in early spring, over the green crops. March: Darkness from the great sandstorms. April: Death of the firstborn, dated by the Passover celebration" (Quoted by David, Moses and the Gods of Egypt, p. 85). Joseph P. Free finds five unique aspects which sets these plagues apart as miraculous events: *Intensification*: frogs, insects, hail, darkness were all common in Egypt, but they were intensified far beyond ordinary occurrence. *Prediction*: the time was set for the coming and removal of the plagues. *Discrimination*: Goshen was spared from the plagues. *Orderliness*: the severity of the plagues increased until they ended with the death of Pharaoh's firstborn. *Moral purpose*: the moral purpose was double, first, to discredit the gods of Egypt, and secondly to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pharaoh, both as a ruler and as a god, as well as of all the gods of Egypt, to turn the tide of calamity. Pharaoh was subject to the same frustrations and anxieties as the rest of the Egyptians. It was because of the king's persistent refusal to yield to God's demands that His judgments were finally unleashed upon Pharaoh, his people and their lands and gods.

The objective of the plagues was not mere punishment, however. They contained a salvific purpose for both Israel and Egypt. They were to convince Pharaoh that the God of the Hebrews was more powerful than the Egyptian gods, and, as such, should be feared and obeyed. The fact that the king himself, during moments when the plagues were intense and devastating, called Moses and Aaron, the ambassadors of Yahweh, to intercede for him, indicates that he had recognized the limitations of his wise men and his gods and acknowleged the undisputed superiority of Yahweh.[1] Also, some of Pharaoh's servants "feared the word of the Lord"[2] and acted accordingly. No doubt these became part of the "mixed multitude"[3] who joined the Israelites as they left Egypt.

---

make known that Yahweh is God, and to acknowledge Him (Archaeology and Bible History /Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1950/, p. 95. For a thorough discussion on this topic see Childs, The Book of Exodus, pp. 121-170 See also Dennis J. McCarthy, "Moses' Dealings with Pharaoh: Ex 8, 8-10, 27," CBQ 27 (1965):336-347, and Greta Hort, "The Plagues of Egypt," ZAW 69 (1957):84-103; 70 (1958):48-59.

[1]Exod 8:25-28; 10:16, 17.

[2]Exod 9:20.

[3]Exod 12:38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Israelites, on their part, were also to renew their confidence in the God of their fathers.[1] And the record states that the plagues had an overwhelming effect upon Israel. As they witnessed the unfolding of God's judgments upon Egypt, they "feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses."[2]

Israel: Saved to Serve

Gathered on the opposite shore, overwhelmed by "the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord"[3] and jubilantly celebrated their liberation with a song of praise to Yahweh. The God of their fathers had heard their groanings. They were free, at last. Yet, liberation from Egypt is only half of the story. They were rescued from slavery in fulfillment of Yahweh's covenant with their fathers and in anticipation to its renewal at Sinai. Yoder has well expressed it:

> Exodus was the leap of faith but Sinai was its landing. Historically Exodus was the prerequisite of Sinai; but morally it is the other way 'round. Liberation is *from* bondage and *for* covenant, and *what for* matters more than *what from*. 4

---

[1]The text insists that the plagues also contained an evangelistic appeal, namely, "that you /Egyptians/ may know that I, the Lord, am in the midst of Israel" (8:22), and "that you /Israelites/. . . may know that I am the Lord" (10:2).

[2]Exod 14:31.

[3]Exod 14:31.

[4]"Exodus and Exile," p. 304.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Escape from Egypt is not enough--not even liberty in Palestine to live their own lives free from threat and oppression.[1] They were freed from the servitude to Pharaoh that they might engage in the service of God. The words "let my people go that they may serve Me"[2] became the keynote of the challenge to Pharaoh. It is not enough to pay attention to the first part of the clause and overlook the second, especially when the Exodus' declared purpose was the service of God, and getting out of Egypt was mainly a means to that end.

There is a very close link between Exodus and Sinai. This link was already implied in the call to Moses: "When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."[3] Liberation was with a purpose. Even before the arrival at Sinai, the fiery cloud was a symbol of Sinai leading them to a special encounter with their God, where they would become,

---

[1]This limitation is observed in Croatto's book Liberación y libertad. He states that the Exodus was an act of liberation, but not the possession of freedom. The going out of Egypt was only the first step that led to the "entrance" into the promised land (p. 14). This is clearly so; but in his exposition there is no detour to Sinai; the goal of Exodus was the possession of the land. This is also evident in Gutiérrez, where he sees the goal of liberation as freedom from every tutelage, so that man can live his life in freedom (A Theology of Liberation, p. 68). It is true that one aspect of the promise to the fathers included "the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and your fathers" (Exod 13:11). Still, this did not exhaust the promise.

[2]Exod 4:16; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3.

[3]Exod 3:12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in a special way, Yahweh's chosen people. The relationship between Yahweh and Israel to be established at Sinai was not totally new. God himself made reference to His covenant with the fathers.[1] However, as a result of what had just happened--the marvelous act of redemption from slavery--they would become, in a new sense, His people, and He their God, "then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God . . ." [2]

Exodus 19-24, containing the theme of the covenant and law, has generally been seen by Old Testament scholars as one of the most important sections, not only of the book of Exodus, but of the entire Old Testament as well. Roy Honeycutt remarks, for example, that

> All of Exodus 1-18 is preparatory to the events described in 19-24, and the Sinai narrative (19:1-24; 32:1-34:35) is the climactic point of the entire book. All before Sinai is prelude; all that follows is postlude. 3

The section begins by stating that in the third month after the Exodus, "on that very day" the Israelites came into the wilderness of Sinai and "camped in front of the mountain."[4] The goal of the journey from Egypt had

---

[1]Exod 6:4, 5.

[2]Exod 6:7.

[3]Roy Lee Honeycutt, "Exodus," The Broadman Bible Commentary, 12 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1:405. See also Cassuto, for whom this is "the most sublime section in the whole book" (Commentary of Exodus, p. 223).

[4]Exod 19:1, 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

been reached, and immediately God announced to Moses his purpose in bringing the children of Israel to Sinai:

> And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine: and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel. 1

The proposal that Israel should enter into covenant with God was predicated on the great divine acts of the past in favor of His people, especially the deliverance from Egypt, and His continual care for them, who "like a great bird watched over his fledglings until he brought them safely to his dwelling,"[2] to the appointed place previously announced to Moses. Israel had been redeemed--and liberated--from Egyptian bondage as an act of grace; all that Israel had needed initially for its liberation was acceptance of God's deliverance.[3] However,

---

[1]Exod 19:4-6.

[2]Childs, The Book of Exodus, p. 367.

[3]God's acts of grace did not cease when the Israelites safely reached the other shore of the Red Sea and the pursuing Egyptians were destroyed. Despite the peoples' complaints and ingratitude, God continued to bless them. He sweetened the waters at Marah (15:22-26); when they ran out of food and cried for a return to the "pots of meat," God provided quail and manna (16:12-21); when they arrived at Rephidim, where there was no water, and the people quarreled with Moses, God provided water from the rock (17:1-7); when opposed by Amalek, they were empowered to overwhelm Amalek and his people

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

now that they found themselves free, they had to decide the nature and direction of their future. Would they decide to work out their own destiny, like the builders of Babel did, or would they give their allegiance to Yahweh, their redeemer? God had demonstrated by His mighty acts that He was their God, and the people, by accepting His deliverance from bondage and His gracious provisions during the journey, had demonstrated their willingness to be called His people. However, it was one thing to be freed from bondage and another to remain free. As Jacob Myers has observed: "to free her (Israel) from political and economic slavery at the time required an act of God. But to remain freedmen not subject to selfishness, greed, and passion demanded covenant with the God of their salvation."[1] To the words of Yahweh, "Now, then, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep My covenant," the Israelites enthusiastically responded "all that the Lord has spoken we will do."[2] The covenant was originated as a gracious act of God's initiative and freely accepted by the people. As Brevard Childs rightly observes,

> Israel did not achieve the covenant status, nor was

(17:8-13). They were miraculously led and protected every step of the way until they reached Mount Sinai.

[1]Jacob Martin Myers, Grace and Torah (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 15.

[2]Exod 19:8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> it granted in a form that was conditioned to her fulfilling certain stipulations. Nevertheless, once Israel became the covenant people, the imperative for obedience followed, and the covenant blessings were conditional upon a faithful response. 1

Israel's uniqueness as God's chosen people is described in a threefold way in the passage quoted above: as a special possession, as a kingdom of priests, and as a holy nation. The entire world belonged to Yahweh; yet in the midst of the nations Israel was called to occupy a very special place, set apart from the rest of the nations. George Knight offers the following explanation for the word *segullah* (possession, treasure) used in verse 5:

> In olden days a king was the ultimate owner of everything in the land he ruled. He owned every building, every farm, every coin. But that kind of 'owning' could give him little personal satisfaction. Consequently in his palace he kept a treasure chest of his 'very own,' in which he delighted to store the precious stones and *objects d'art* which he loved to handle. This treasure-box was his *segullah*. In the same way, God, who had made the whole earth, and to whom all nations belonged, looked now upon Israel as his own peculiar treasure. 2

Thus Israel would become God's special treasure, His chosen people among all other peoples, as the recent events had clearly demonstrated. All nations of the earth would now look upon Israel as Yahweh's peculiar possession,

---

[1]Biblical Theology in Crisis (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), 214.

[2]George A. F. Knight, Law and Grace (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 25. For further discussion of this word see Moshe Greenberg, "Hebrew *segullah*: Akkadian *sikiltu*," JAOS 71 (1951):172-174.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as a privileged people. However, Israel was not chosen just to enjoy a preferential status among other nations. Without ignoring the fact that election carries with it privilege, election is not mainly for privilege, but for service. God did not choose Israel because of its inherent greatness, but because it was best suited for His purpose. And its suitability rested on the fact that it was not "more in numbers than any other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers . . ."[1] It was in Israel's utter helplessness that God's redeeming purposes--for itself and for the world--could best be worked out.[2] It was chosen to become a "kingdom of priests,"[3] and as a priest is ordained to serve others, so Israel was chosen to be a servant of God and a blessing to the nations. With the special privilege of priests--free access to God's presence--Israel was to act as His representative on behalf of other nations, out of which God had chosen it as His

---

[1]Deut 7:7, 8.

[2]On the topic of Israel's election, see H. H. Rowley's very helpful study, The Biblical Doctrine of Election (London: Lutterworth Press, 1950), especially chap. 1, "The Election of Israel," pp. 15-44. The keynote of this chapter is that election is for service, and it is not based on racial preference.

[3]Exod 19:6. See on this topic William L. Moran, "A Kingdom of Priests," in John L. McKenzie, ed., The Bible in Current Catholic Thought (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), pp. 7-20.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

costly *segullah*. As a kingdom of priests, the Israelites would be "a people comprised wholly of priests, a people that will occupy among humanity the place filled by the priests within each nation";[1] they were to be mediators of God's redemptive grace to the nations of the earth, thus fulfilling the initial intent of the Abrahamic covenant, "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."[2] The covenant with the fathers did link Israel to the rest of the world, in that through God's chosen people, *all* nations were to have access to God's saving purposes for them.

Finally, Israel was to become "a holy nation," set apart, a nation dedicated entirely to the service of Yahweh. It was to be different from the nations that did not know God. This holiness was not an outward sign only, in being set apart from among the nations, but inward, also to be manifested in a godly life. The ideal for the newly constituted Israel was for it to be an example in believing, in behavior, in worship; it was to reflect God's presence. Israel was to be holy, for Yahweh, its God, was holy.[3] Clearly, the Exodus includes,

---

[1]Cassuto, Commentary on Exodus, p. 227.

[2]Gen. 12:3.

[3]See Lev 19:2. Holiness was not a mystical quality to be sought after, but rather the way of obedience in the service of Yahweh for the benefit of their fellowmen and for a blessing to all nations. Holiness, according to this chapter, should be manifested in respect for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as one of its perspectives, the redeeming action of God, redemption that man stood in need of after the fall.

It was not God's purpose in calling Israel to facilitate the erecting of another kingdom on earth, but to make it a holy nation, a nation of redeemed people, a commonwealth of brothers whose life together would be characterized by love and concern for others, as they had experienced the love and concern of the covenant-keeping God.

It is in this context, and in the midst of fire, smoke, and the sound of trumpet, that the words of the covenant[1] were given to Israel as a guideline to show the

---

parents and in keeping of the Sabbath (19:3), in rejecting idols (19:4), in leaving the gleanings of the field and vineyard for the poor and alien (19:9, 10), in being impartial in judgment (9:15), in loving and protecting the alien (9:33, 34), in using honest scales and weights (9:36) (See Engelhard, "The Lord's Motivated Concern," p. 22.

[1]Recent discoveries of Ancient Near Eastern texts have helped us understand the literary composition of covenants and treaties. Near Eastern treaties were generally of two types, the Parity treaty and the Suzerainty treaty. In the first, two kings of more or less equal importance bound each other in identical obligations. The Suzerainty treaty, on the other hand, was imposed by a strong king on his vassal. George E. Mendenhall has found that the treaties made between kings and their vassals in the Ancient Near East, particularly involving the Hittites, offer some parallels to the form of the covenant found in the Old Testament, especially in Exod 20 and in the book of Deuteronomy. According to Mendenhall, a typical Hittite Suzerainty treaty has six parts which are parallel to the Mosaic law: a preamble, a historical prologue, stipulations, provisions for depositing the treaty in the sanctuary and for its public reading, a list of witnesses, curses and blessings for breakers and/or keepers of the treaties (Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East /Pittsburg: The Biblical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

people that He had just redeemed how to live according to God's will; "the law becomes the instrument of a mutual relationship in which faith responds to love."[1] The law became a guideline for those who had entered into covenant with God. They were not left on their own, to create their own future. As clearly as there were prerequisites for the liberating Exodus, there were also postrequisites. The covenant stipulations were not only based on an act of the past, but they implied a continuing relationship between the parties involved.

Israel's motivation for moral action was deeply rooted in its covenant relationship with God; the peoples'

Colloquium, 1955). Mendenhall's conclusions have been both challenged and defended. Dennis J. McCarthy, Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinion (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1972), provides an excellent survey of recent discussion on the question of the covenant in the Old Testament. See also James Muilenburg, "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations, VT 9 (1959):347-365, and J. A. Thompson, "The Near Eastern Suzerainty Vassal Concept in the Religion of Israel," JHR 3 (1964):1-19.

[1]Myers, Grace and Torah, p. 16. In addition to the Ten Commandments, Israel was given a series of laws to make clear the application of the Decalogue to the daily life of the Israelites (Exod 20:22-23:19). These instructions include information concerning the proper place of sacrifice, the treatment of slaves, and other applications of the law to circumstances of daily life. See Charles F. Pfeiffer, Old Testament History (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 169. This is not to imply that just laws originated with the Exodus. Certain laws of the Pentateuch show, not only in form but also in substance, many parallels with the laws of Hammurabi and other legal codes of the Ancient Near East. This does not deny, however, the impact the Exodus had in underlining social justice in Israel. See Breneman, "El Éxodo como tema de interpretación teológica," p. 44.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

response was based on Yahweh's own work on their behalf; the words "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery"[1] prefaces the stipulations of the covenant. Walter Eichrodt underlines the lasting significance of the Exodus when he states that "the redemption from Egypt received its definite interpretation in the covenant-making on Sinai, and thus became the foundation and the orientation of all mutual relations of Yahweh and his prople."[2]

Beyond the Exodus

Old Testament

Scripture presents the Exodus as a segment of *Heilsgeschichte*, as a part of a larger story, the patriarchal narrative providing an indispensable prelude. There is a postlude too. The Exodus was not God's last act or word; it was the beginning of a project to be brought to fulfillment. Thus, while the Exodus gives perspective and illuminates the later events of Israel's history, the subsequent salvation history brings out and refines the

---

[1]Exod 20:2. In the rest of the covenant code the same motivation is often emphasized: "And you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (22:21), "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry to Me, I will surely hear his cry" (22:22, 23). See T. B. Matson, "Biblical Basis for Social Concern," SWJT 7 (1975):5-16.

[2]Theology of the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 1:292.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meaning of the Exodus: a version of the hermeneutic circle.[1]

The Exodus was an act of justice in which God responded to the cries of the oppressed and punished the oppressor, setting free the oppressed, His people, to engage in His service and to show mercy to others as they had been the objects of mercy. Later on, other nations were dispossessed so that His people could take possession of the land that had been promised to their fathers.[2]

The subsequent history of Israel shows that they

---

[1]See Goldingay, "The Man of War," p. 94. For a significant recent study of the history of Israel, especially during the time of the conquest and settlement in Canaan, Norman K. Gottwald's massive work, The Tribes of Yahweh. A Sociology of Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 B.C.E. (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1979), should not be ignored. Gottwald's approach calls for an "enormous methodological shift . . . a shift from thinking of cultural and social realities deriving from beliefs about God to thinking of cultural and social realities as the matrices for spawning correlative beliefs about God" (p. 912). Even though his approach represents assumptions and leads to conclusions we do not share, e.g., that the patriarchal period is "simply a pseudohistorical retrojection of tradition (p. 38); that we should speak of a "Moses group" rather than of a "single figure of Moses" (p. 38); or that the idea of God itself is no more than a projection of Israel based on her concept of a "strataless society" (p. 648), it contains much that is of value for the Biblical student.

[2]Moses reminded the people: "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God is driving them before you, in order to confirm the oath which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Deut 9:5). See further on this topic, Pfeiffer, Old Testament History, pp. 197-212; Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 105-139.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

failed to live up to God's expectations, both in being a blessing to the nations and in living as brothers among themselves. The prophetic literature amply testifies to Israel's failures. From the eighth-century prophet Amos to the fifth century Malachi, Israel stands under judgment for her apostasy from God, her oppression of the poor, and her sinful neglect of the widow and the fatherless. "Hear this," cried Amos, "you who trample the needy, to do away with the humble of the land";[1] "Your rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves; everyone loves a bribe, and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow's plea come before them."[2]

When Israel violated the covenant, and like Egypt, became an oppressor of the poor, with no compassion for the needy, Yahweh turned against it as he had turned against Egypt.[3] And Israel was back in exile again; God's chosen nation "liberated from bondage, covenanted to Yahweh, and enjoying freedom in the land of promise, reaches its

---

[1]Amos 8:4; see also 2:6, 7; 4:1; 5:11; 8:4-8.

[2]Isa 1:23. Amos, Isaiah, and the other prophets were not the inventors of a new moral code. They were dependent on the covenant and were calling for renewal and obedience. For further discussion on this concept, see Vawter, The Conscience of Israel, pp. 13-18'

[3]Lind observes that when Yahweh's warfare was directed against Israel, it was never by means of miracles, but by the armies of Israel's enemies. See Yahweh Is a Warrior, pp. 23, 24. This concept becomes key in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lowest ebb: the covenant is destroyed, the land is lost, the bondage re-entered."[1] Paradoxically, the exile came in a time when Israel was enjoying unprecedented prosperity. Being at the zenith of power, and apparently safe from foreign enemies, Israel felt secure and sensed no danger. However, there was nothing it could do when Yahweh turned against it.

The exile clearly points to the fact that God's people failed, that man's basic problem is himself, and that God's ultimate purpose is not going to be achieved through political history. Although God continued to be involved in that history, His deepest work was done "through the affliction of his servant,"[2] What Israel needed above all else was an inner transformation, to be saved from itself. That God would effect such transformation as the one and only hope for Israel was eagerly proclaimed by the prophets. Jeremiah in Jerusalem and Ezekiel in Babylon both spoke of it:

> And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart. 3
>
> Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will

---

the interpretation of the events of 722 and 586, the collapse of Samaria and Jerusalem.

[1]Goldingay, "The Man of War," p. 94.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Jer 24:7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. 1

The prophets were looking forward to the time when this "new covenant" would be established, when God would implant His law in their own hearts. Then the goal of the covenant would have been fully realized: "I will be their God, and they shall be My people,"[2] Only then will they be equipped to be God's agents of blessing to the nations.

New Testament

Finally, and from a Christian perspective, a Biblical theology will have to take into account the New Testament and the interpretation it gives to events recorded in the Old Testament, in this case, the Exodus.[3]

---

[1]Ezek 36:25-28.

[2]Jer 31:31-34. See Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation," p. 161.

[3]Little attention is given in liberation theology writings to the New Testament interpretation of the Exodus event. In A Theology of Liberation, pp. 168-178, Gutiérrez talks about "Christ and Complete Liberation," and relates once the work of Christ to the Exodus in a quotation from the Medellin documents, "It is the same God who, in the fullness of time, sends his son in the flesh, so that he might come to liberate man from *all* slavery to which sin has subjected them: hunger, misery, oppression and ignorance, in a word, that injustice and hatred which have their origin in human selfishness" (p. 176. The quote is from "Justice," Art. 31).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As Christians we cannot read, interpret, and apply the Old Testament as if Christ had not yet come. The New Testament might give us insights and perspectives that could not be easily discerned without its help. As Eichrodt has observed,

> In expounding the realm of OT thought and belief we must never lose sight of the fact that the OT religion, ineffaceable individual though it may be, can yet be grasped in its essential uniqueness only when it is seen as completed in Christ. 1

The anticipation of a new Exodus as a pattern of deliverance became common in the Old Testament,[2] and was even more pronounced in intertestamental Judaism, in its preoccupation with the coming of Messianic salvation. As Sahlin has observed:

> The Messiah was expected to repeat what Moses had done. Among other things, he was to send new plagues

---

[1] Theology of the Old Testament, 1:27. John Bright states that having discovered the message of an Old Testament passage "the preacher must--because he is a Christian and has received the Old Testament from the hands of Christ, who is its fulfillment--bring his text to the New Testament, as it were, for verdict" (The Authority of the Old Testament /Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967/, p. 211). The New Testament, while illuminating the old, should not invalidate its natural meaning. However, any contemporary use of the Exodus theme, as well as other themes, ought to take seriously the New Testament to see what it has done with this particular aspect of the Old Testament faith in the light of Christ, to see whether it has modified it or given it a new significance. On the relationship between the Old and the New Testament, see Breneman, "El Éxodo como tema de interpretación teológica," pp. 32-38; and Thomas Linton Leishman, The Interrelation of the Old and New Testaments (New York: Vantage Press, 1968).

[2] Isaiah for example, described Yahweh's advent in language drawn from the Exodus (43:19, 20; 48:21;

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> upon the oppressors of Israel. He was again to bring forth water out of the rock and perform a miracle of manna. Like the deliverance from Egypt, the final deliverance would take place at the Passover. 1

Later, the New Testament writers saw this new Exodus as having occurred in Jesus Christ, in whose person and work many phases of the Exodus were recapitulated.[2]

When the New Testament tells of the saving work of God in Christ, the major portion of the vocabulary it uses is drawn from the Exodus event. Such New Testament words as "redeem," "redemption," "deliver," "ransom,"

52:11, 12). See Daube, The Exodus Pattern in the Bible, p. 11, and Fred L. Fisher, "A New and Greater Exodus: The Exodus Pattern in the New Testament," SWJT 20 (1977):70.

[1]"The New Exodus," p. 82.

[2]What Yahweh said to Pharaoh about Israel, "Israel is My son, my first-born" (Exod 4:22), is said again from heaven about Jesus: "This is My beloved son" (Mark 4:22). As Israel went down to Egypt and was brought up again, so Matthew records the descent of Jesus' family to Egypt and its return, and applies to Jesus "that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt did I call My son'" (Matt 2:15). Jesus' forty days of testing in the Judean desert form a parallel to Israel's forty years of testing in the wilderness--and both periods of testing came as a sequel to a baptismal experience. Luke describes Jesus' passion as "His departure /Greek: *exodos*/ which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (9:31). In Jesus God performs a new and greater revelation, brings about a new and greater deliverance, because Jesus is a new and greater Moses: "Moses was able to seal the covenant only with the blood of calves and goats; Christ is the mediator of a new covenant sealed in his own blood" (Johnson, "Moses," p. 449). For further discussion on this topic, see Frederick F. Bruce, New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 32-39, and Fisher, "The New and Greater Exodus," pp. 67-79.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"purchase," "bondage," "slavery," and "freedom" have an Exodus ring to them.[1] The liberation that Jesus brings, however, in the light of the Gospels, is not political.[2] Jesus rejected the way of the sword; liberation would come through His own death, as the lamb of God, to bring ransom and redemption to man.[3] He aimed at the restoration of man to his original condition. Sin, for Jesus, goes deeper than the structures of society. His mission was not to transform directly the sociological conditions of man; even when He alleviated the sufferings of many, He aimed at creating the conditions necessary to that afterwards, in the primitive Christian community, there would be found "no needy person among them."[4] The "good

---

[1]Bright, God Who Acts, p. 63.

[2]This does not mean that Jesus was not interested in politics. With His words and actions He questioned all powers--political, social, economic--of this world. Yet His earthly mission was a confrontation with the powers of this world. Parallel to the shift to the left in most Christian churches in the last few years, there is an attempt to assign to Jesus a liberating role in society in harmony with current political trends. This is the major focus of the two best-known books on Christ by liberation theologians: Leonardo Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator, and Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads. Pope John Paul II warned the Latin American bishops at Puebla that making Jesus a "revolutionary from Nazareth" was a distortion of the gospel. A vehement protest against the Church's involvement in politics has recently been made by Edward Norman of Cambridge University in the B.B.C.Reith Lectures of 1978 (The lectures have been published in book form, Christianity and the World Order /Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979/).

[3]Matt 26:51-53. See Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, pp. 135-162.

[4]Acts 4:34. Yoder rightly points out that the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

news" that He preached was not primarily a message of economic-political liberation, but the fact that the kingdom of God has erupted into history.[1] In the person and work of Christ, the great divine liberation of this world has actually begun. With the coming of Christ, the "not yet" had broken into the present, announcing that salvation is a present as well as a future reality, thus creating a tension between the "already" and the "not yet."[2] The announcement of the good news was not

---

Christian community is "the primary social structure through which the gospel works to change other structures" (The Politics of Jesus, p. 157). This does not detract from Jesus' emphasis on the need for an individual interior change of attitudes, i.e., conversion, in the individual members of such community. See John 3:1-8; Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3. See also Sider, "Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice," IRM 64 (1975):264.

[1]The gospels over and over define the content of the Good News as the kingdom which was present in the person and work of Christ (Matt 4:23; 24:14; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:43). As George E. Ladd expresses it, "Our central thesis is that the Kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among men, and that this kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign" (A Theology of the New Testament /Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974/), p. 91.

[2]This tension can be weakened or annulled in two ways. One the one hand, by an undue stress on realized eschatology, thus underestimating the otherworldly aspect of God's salvation and overestimating the power of man. This is one of the obvious weaknesses of liberation theology. On the other hand, this tension can also be annulled by an overemphasis of the "not yet," thus underestimating the impact of Christ's death and resurrection and the active presence of the Holy Spirit in history. An overstress on the "not yet" which has been one of the weaknesses of much traditional theology, tends to inspire

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

political but messianic in nature. This is the way the early Church understood it. The book of Acts begins with the rejection of any political messianism. To the question of the disciples, "Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom of Israel?"[1]--which has clear political connotations--the Lord answered, dispelling any doubt regarding the nature of their mission: "It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."[2] The mission of the disciples depended on the Holy Spirit and consisted in being witnesses to the Lord "to the remotest part of the earth." It had nothing to do, directly at least, with the contemporary politics of Palestine, even though its inhabitants were under the yoke of a foreign, oppressive power. When the conflict with the "oppressors" became finally intense, the Christians did not take part in the uprising, but withdrew to Transjordan.

---

an attitude of resignation towards history, passively waiting for God's final renewal of all things. See The Church and its Social Calling (Grand Rapids: Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1979), pp. 82, 83, and Anthony A. Hoekema, "Already, not Yet: Christian Living in Tension," RefJ 29 (Jan 1979):15-18.

[1]Acts 1:6.

[2]Acts 1:7, 8. See Mejía, "La liberación," p. 295.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This does not mean, however, that the New Testament eschatological hope is just a future "opium of the people," a mere promise with an exclusive otherworldly intent, having nothing to do with the present life. Salvation is not a forensic transaction that fits the soul for the beyond, unrelated to human affairs. Eternal life is salvation that brings liberation in the present; "he who believes in the Son *has* eternal life."[1]

The eschatological salvation that the Christian already possesses affects very concretely his life here and now, in all the realms of existence, "to erase the effects of sin and to carry the redemption wrought by Christ to its ultimate consequences."[2] Jesus himself identified with the poor, the outcasts, the needy; "he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil."[3] No responsible New Testament exegesis can ignore these facts, which are very much present in the gospels. The Christian's attitude vis-à-vis the

---

[1]John 3:36.

[2]Mejía, "La liberación," p. 306.

[3]Acts 10:38. According to the gospels, Jesus devoted vast amounts of His time healing the sick and feeding the hungry, besides preaching and teaching. Evidently, He considered it part of His mission, and expected His followers to do likewise. Liberation theologians' concern for the sick and the needy is Biblical and welcome, especially when the Church has not always been faithful in following the Master's example. It should not be overlooked, however, that nowhere the gospels portray Jesus as being directly involved in the political restructuring of society for the sake of greater social justice.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

world, however, like Christ's, will ever remain a complex one: he is *in* the world, but he is not *of* the world;[1] he must be concerned for the world, and at the same time keep a distance from it.

The Christian, because he follows his Lord, cannot ascetically isolate himself from history, because the redemption he has received from Christ--like the redemption portrayed in the Exodus story--"is liberating in its very nature and its true thrust."[2] Yet the Christian will always remember that his destiny is not fulfilled within history.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that the Exodus from Egypt, an event that involved the whole nation of Israel, became the redemptive event *par excellence* in its faith. "In the deliverance from Egypt Israel saw the guarantee for all the future, the absolute surety for Yahweh's will to save, something like a warrant to which faith could appeal in times of trial."[3] However, as Von Rad further points out, the Exodus is neither the theological center nor the foundation of all the Old Testament.[4] It is an

---

[1]John 1:10, 11; 17:11, 14, 16.

[2]Harold B. Kuhn, "Liberation Theology: a Semantic Approach," WesleyThJ 15 (1980):35.

[3]Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:176.

[4]Ibid. J. Coert Rylaarsdam points out that the title of the book--"Exodus"--"does not do full justice

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

integral part of a larger story, a segment of redemptive history. Therefore, the perspective given by what precedes and what follows that momentous event should not be ignored.

The Exodus is preceded by the account of creation, the tragedy of man's first disobedience, his alienation from God, the distortion of political power, and the arrogant aspiration of unity on a humanistic basis, which led to the judgment of the fall, the flood, the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of mankind.[1] Yet, alongside God's acts of judgments against sin, His saving will was also made manifest: God remained close to those whom He had punished. At one point, however, this gracious protection is absent; "The story of Babel ends without grace."[2] The further relationship of God to the nations is unveiled in the call of Abraham: God now begins to work out His purposes through a succession of individuals who serve as His appointed means to extend His word of blessing to *all* nations.

---

to the subject matter. Nor does it disclose the central motif. Less than half the book deals with Israel's departure from Egypt. . . . The controlling motif is the revelation of God's power in His victory over the Pharaoh which for the writers is a disclosure of His universal lordship" (The Interpreter's Bible, 1:833).

[1]Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, p. 83.

[2]Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:163. Ringgren further observes: "The unusual positive element of the punishment of prehistoric man is missing here; instead of this, the story of the chosen people of God begins with Gen 12 with the call of Abraham" ("*babhel*," p. 467).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The descendants of Abraham became a numerous nation in Egypt; thus, when they were liberated from slavery, they were not only slaves, but were regarded by Yahweh as "My people." The Exodus from Egypt was, as Gutiérrez points out, a socio-political event,[1] since it affected the temporal condition of both Israel and Egypt; yet, it was, above all, a religious event. The interpretation that the Bible gives to this event looks not so much to the new political situation of freedom that Israel enjoyed, or to its relation with Egypt, but to its renewed relationship with Yahweh and its new responsibilities vis-à-vis the world.[2]

The subsequent history of Israel sadly reveals its repeated failures to respond to God's saving grace; thus, instead of becoming a blessing to the nations, it was punished through those it failed to bless. Due to Israel's failures, prophet after prophet began to look forward with eager anticipation to the time when a new Exodus would take place.

When the New Testament writers sought a model with which to express the salvation accomplished by

---

[1] A Theology of Liberation, p. 155.

[2] This new relationship and responsibilities were outlined at Sinai; as Eichrodt correctly states, "the redemption from Egypt receives its definitive interpretation at the covenant--made on Sinai--and thus became the foundation and orientation of all natural relations of Yahweh and his people" (Theology of the Old Testament, 1:292).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Jesus Christ, they found in the Exodus a very convenient pattern already embedded in the life and thought of Israel. Not that the Exodus became the only model employed, but it became an important one, as it is reflected in the number of quotations taken from the book of Exodus and in the use of Exodus language.[1] The pattern is clearly discerned in the stories of the infancy, ministry, and death of Christ.[2]

Since the first Exodus had not really achieved its goal, a second one must occur.[3] The New Testament

---

[1]The chief events of the Old Testament which furnish the pattern for the happenings in the New are the redemption from Egyptian bondage, the consecration of the people by the covenant, and the gift of inheritance (William J. Phythian-Adams, The Way of At-one-ment. Studies in Biblical Theology /London: SCM Press, 1944/, chap. 1: "The Pattern of Sacred History," pp. 9-26). The author points out that when Paul writes that "He /the Father/ delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:13, 14), "he summarizes the sacred era in a single sentence. First redemption from bondage, followed by 'translation (the journey to the promised land), then consecration by the remission of sins, and finally the kingdom of 'David' (the "Beloved'); the pattern is then complete. This 'kingdom' in Christ is 'the inheritance of the saints in light'" (p. 23).

[2]See Harold Sahlin, "The New Exodus of Salvation According to St. Paul," in Anton Fredrichsen, ed., The Root of the Vine. Essays in Biblical Theology (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1953), pp. 81-95. "Thus we conclude," writes Sahlin," that the New Exodus of salvation determines the thought of St. Paul as well as of the entire primitive Church. The New Testament can, as a whole, be regarded as a detailed fulfillment of the types of the Old Testament Exodus, God's great act of salvation for the people of His election" (p. 94).

[3]In the New Testament the motifs of Exodus,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

writers saw this new Exodus as having occurred in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. He is the new Exodus, the new Passover.[1] In His life, death, and resurrection He accomplished not only what the Exodus from Egypt failed to accomplish, but also that to which it pointed, namely, the final redemption of mankind from sin's tyrannical power.[2]

---

redemption and liberation become predominantly spiritual, since "redemption from sin is the central idea, because man's weakness and willfulness is his deepest problem, without which his political, social and economic problems cannot be solved (Goldingay, "The Man of War," p. 105). However, the New Testament also shows that God's saving concerns are broader than spiritual; Christ was concerned with the "whole man," his temporal needs included, as His tireless ministry on behalf of the sick and the hungry amply testifies.

[1]1 Cor 5:7. See Wright, God Who Acts, p. 63.

[2]See Bruce, New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes, pp. 32-39.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Liberation theology, one of the leading schools of theology in our day, represents a long evolution in the definition by Roman Catholics of their role in Latin America. During the colonial period, under royal patronage, the Catholic Church enjoyed an influential moral and cultural position. It was in the nineteenth century that the defenders of the traditional position of the church clashed with those who held anticlerical tendencies inspired by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution.

There have been, during the twentieth century, several factors that have had a bearing on the redefinition of the function of the church. Mention can be made of the acceptance of the autonomy of the secular state, the promotion of the lay apostolate through Catholic Action groups, and the growth of Christian Democratic parties. After 1920 a different outlook which assumed that the church's guidance was integral to a healthy society through indirect Catholic organizations became apparent. This trend became known as the "New Christendom."

The New Christendom broke down during the 1960s as a result of new theological views stimulated by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Vatican II and dialogue with other points of view, especially Marxism. The desire of Christians, especially the youth, to participate in movements of social change was accompanied by efforts to work out a theological justification for their action.[1]

The Latin American Bishop's gathering at Medellín in 1968 is usually regarded as the single event that more than anything else gave impetus and legitimacy to liberation theology.[2]

Liberation theology is eminently an ethical theology that grew out of social awareness and desire to

---

[1]See Thomas G. Sanders, "The Theology of Liberation: Christian Utopianism," ChrCris 33 (1973):167. Liberation movements preceded the theology of liberation. "Liberation" gained popular currency in connection with social and political movements, usually identified with the left. They orginated in Africa as movements of national liberation against colonial powers, and were entirely political in nature. Some years later Christian theologians became interested in these national liberation movements and began to develop a theology that is today widely known as theology of liberation, and whose concerns by and large coincide with liberation movements. See Harold O. J. Brown, "True and False Liberation in the Light of Scripture," in Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry, eds. Perspectives in Evangelical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 135-150, for an informative discussion of different factors in recent history that contributed to the development of liberation views.

[2]Much of liberation theology that originated in Latin America was written in the glow of Medellín. Subsequent political changes in the continent, however, have led to a noticeable shift in emphasis from the Exodus to captivity as a Biblical motif. The earlier tone of triumphalism in liberationist writings has been toned down somewhat.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

act in combating oppression and misery.[1] This "new way of doing theology," as well as other theological currents, is strongly influenced by the secularization of our age. Christianity today "has increasingly borrowed its political outlook and vocabulary, the issues it regards as most urgently requiring attention, and even its tests of moral virtue, from the progressive thinking of the surrounding secular culture."[2] Secularism promotes a self-consciousness which makes any dependent relationship with God unnecessary.

There are two fundamental intuitions in liberation theology as it is articulated by Gutiérrez: the perspective of the poor and the hermeneutics of liberation praxis.[3] These ideas have made liberation theology timely and appealing in a world where the evils of oppression, exploitation, injustice, colonialism, and imperialism are very much in evidence. One may disagree with some of the basic assumptions of liberation theology, but one cannot deny that there is an intimate connection between theology and God's call in a concrete situation.

---

[1]Liberation theology has been taken by some as a brand of applied theology. Schubert M. Ogden, in Faith and Freedom: Toward a Theology of Liberation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) argues that liberation theology is "not so much theology as witness" (pp. 33-35) because it lacks the basis of an adequate metaphysics. See Fierro, The Militant Gospel, pp. 315-18, for similar conclusions.

[2]Norman, Christianity and the World Order, p. 15.

[3]Gutiérrez, "Anunciar el evangelio a los pobres, desde los pobres," p. 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"We may be able to show that the diagnosis of the evils of society and the cure offered by the theology of liberation are colored by Marxist dialectics, but the economic dependence of the underdeveloped countries is by no means a myth created by that theology."[1]

Liberation theology has clearly demonstrated that traditional European and North American theologies have tended to overlook some fundamental Biblical themes, e.g., that the Gospel cannot be divorced from life, that there can be no separation between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, and that preoccupation for social justice is a central concern of Scriptures. Liberation theology, however, while expressing deep concern for justice and the poor, has also shown some inherent limitations, which if not remedied, will continue to have limited appeal to Evangelical Christians.

In their efforts to avoid distractions from the historical task at hand, and in reaction against too exclusive an emphasis of the otherworldly in much of traditional theology, liberation theologians tend to stress the historical and play down the transcendent to the extent that they come up with an impoverished soteriology.[2]

---

[1]Padilla, "The Theology of Liberation," p. 201.

[2]Neuhaus rightly observes that the ignoring of the transcendent by liberation theology is in the long run a tactical mistake, "for the religious impulse and intuition is incurable, and rightly, hooked on the transcendent. To deny this impulse and intention is to set oneself against the motor force that gathers and sustains religious

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

An excessive verticalism, which limited liberation from sin and evil to private and eternal dimensions, is being replaced by a no less excessive horizontalism which reduces salvation to social and political dimensions. If liberation theology could be true both to the aspirations of the oppressed and to the reality of the beyond, it would have a better chance of becoming *the* theology of the near future. Without any intent to detract from its merits, however, and as a way of illustration, we wish to suggest some areas that, if no corrections are forthcoming, will limit the usefulness of liberation theology and make the charge of *reductionism* difficult to avoid.

The Poor

One major concern has to do with the ideological bias of the social analysis. Liberation theology is right in focusing its attention on the poor, on the wretched of the earth, and the struggle for their liberation. However, it would have a better perspective if it had as its rationale for siding with the poor the central Biblical affirmation that God is on the side of the poor,[1] rather than a secondary basis "arbitrarily selected on a hermeneutical key because of the ideological basis of the

---

community" ("Liberation as Program and Promise: On Refusing to Settle for Less," CurM 2 [1975]:90).

[1]Luke 1:46-53. See Ronald Sider, "An Evangelical Theology of Liberation," CC 97 (1980):318.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

oppressed."[1] This hermeneutical key, due to its ideological categories, tends to divide society sharply into "good guys and bad guys," the oppressed and the oppressor, the poor and the rich, and then identifies poverty *only* with material deficiencies.[2] In a legitimate protest against a total spiritualization of the theme of poverty in Scripture, liberation theology reduces it to socio-economic dimensions, again substituting a one-dimensional perspective for another.[3]

If the poor that are to be liberated are the materially poor exclusively, then the liberation needed is primarily in terms of earthly and material well-being and can hardly be distinguished from the liberation offered

---

[1]Ronald J. Sider, "A Symposium of Responses," ThEd 16 (1979):59.

[2]"There is one characteristic in particular which holds a central place: the division of humanity into oppressors and oppressed, into owners of means of production and those dispossessed of the fruit of their work, into antagonist social classes" (Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 272, 273).

[3]The perspective given in Scripture indicates that man is affected not only by material deprivation, but by spiritual and psychological deprivation as well. As Herman Ridderbos has pointed out, the "poor," and "poor in spirit" in the Old Testament, "represent the socially oppressed, those who suffer from the power of injustice and are harrassed by those who only consider their own advantage and influence. They are, however, at the same time those who remain faithful to God and expect their salvation from his kingdom alone" (The Coming of the Kingdom [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962], p. 188).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by the politician or the economist. As Carl E. Braaten observes, "The kind of salvation liberation theology lifts up is something Athens could in principle discover without the help of Jerusalem, something Marx in fact called for without reference to Jesus, something which will come about through human praxis without any necessary dependence on God's act in Christ."[1]

The fact that God is on the side of the poor does not necessarily imply that He does not love the rich, even when it is true that "the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil,"[2] including oppression and callous disregard for the needs of others. According to the Old Testament perspective "the rich and the poor have a common bond, the Lord is the maker of them all."[3] The liberated slaves were instructed not to be "partial to a poor man in his dispute."[4] Even the feelings of compassion and sympathy must be silent in the presence of justice. The possibility of creative repentance might be present in those who are often blind to what they are

---

[1]"The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," Int 35 (1981):127,128. See J. D. Gort's very useful essay, "Gospel for the Poor?" Missio 7 (1979):325-54. Gort questions whether the emphasis placed on the poor by many, such as the liberation theologians, has been excessive, distorting the message of the Gospel.

[2]1 Tim 6:10.

[3]Prov 22:2; Job 34:19. The birth of Christ was celebrated by humble shepherds *and* by wise men with their costly gifts.

[4]Exod 23:3; Lev 19:15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

doing to others, as the case of David and Nathan suggests.[1] There is, besides, frequent counsel in Scripture that there can be redemptive significance in resignation to adversity and injustice, which is not countenanced in liberation theology. In the providence of God adversity could have a therapeutic purpose, as the forty years of wilderness wandering imply.[2]

It is true to say that God is on the side of the poor. He is not often on the side of the most powerful armies. Nor is He even necessarily with those who have great plans and strategies to build the future. He is on the side of the poor, the little ones, those who are so poor and weak that they make no revolution and can contribute nothing for the betterment of humanity. They "hope against hope"[3] in the God of Israel, in the God who intervenes on behalf of those who cannot liberate themselves.

Praxis

Liberation theology has its origin mainly in social circumstances rather than in the teachings of Scriptures;

---

[1] 2 Sam 12. Due to the fact that sin permeates both social and private existence, acts of injustice should not all be viewed as the work of malicious individuals but, to a degree, as also the product of twisted social structures. Not always are these individuals clearly aware of the role they play and that repentance is possible. People must be seen not only as agents of sin but also as its victims even in their acting (Clark H. Pinnock, "Evangelical Theology of Human Liberation," Part 2, Sojourners 5 [March 1976]:26).

[2] Jas 1:2,3; Heb 2:18.

[3] Rom 4:8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

consequently, it tends to subordinate the Gospel to historical options. In this particular hermeneutical approach, Scripture plays a secondary role, mainly as a source of models from which certain principles are derived. Sometimes by "loose analogy,"[1] as secondary frame of reference. In its commitment on behalf of social justice, liberation theology, like Moses when he killed the Egyptian, engages itself in liberative acts on behalf of the poor *before* listening to what God's word might have to say about the nature of the liberation to be achieved or of the means to be employed to bring it about.

The emphasis is on discerning through praxis what God is doing in the world and then join Him, rather than discerning what is God's saving word for the world and, on that basis, join in His saving activity. The stress on the historical situation as the *locus theologicus*, in fact, replaces the revelation in Scripture by the revelation of contemporary events--ignoring the fact that there are two mysteries operating in history at the same time: the mystery of salvation and the mystery of evil. The devil, even though vanquished, still continues active in the world. Consequently, Christians stand in need of a criterion to distinguish between the divine and the demonic in the events of history, to discern God's presence and absence in history.

---

[1]Armerding, "Exodus," p. 48; see Costas, The Church and Its Mission, pp. 151-155.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is not uncommon today to use the Exodus to justify almost any type of revolutionary, liberating uprisings. Julio de Santa Ana starts from the Exodus to justify a Marxist type of revolution. He states that "this affirmation [the need of freedom], is underscored by the practice and experience of Biblical characters (Moses, Jesus) and extrabiblical (Lenin, Emiliano Zapata . . . Ho Chi Minh, Ernesto Guevara, and others)."[1] Many are bound to ask, however, how can one be certain that in following Franz Fanon, Camilo Torres, Ernesto Guevara, he is indeed following the God of the Exodus? What assurance can one have that to follow some of these modern heroes would not rather correspond to following Aaron, when he made the golden calf, not to mention Hitler in modern times?[2] Biblical Christianity does not depend for its source of truth on any kind of praxis but rather on the timeless message contained in Scripture,

---

[1]"Notas para una ética de la liberación a partir de la Biblia," Cristianismo y sociedad 24, 25 (1970):58.

[2]Looking back from our vantage perspective, it is hard to understand how the so-called "German Christians" saw the special leading of God in Hitler's rise to power in 1933. But a number of Christians saw in it a providential sign. A group of theologians actually signed the following statement: "We are full of thanks to God that He, as Lord of history, has given us Adolf Hitler, our leader and savior from our difficult lot. We acknowledge that we, with body and soul, are bound and dedicated to the German state and to its *Führer*. This bondage and duty contains for us, as evangelical Christians, its deepest and most holy significance in its obedience to the command of God" (Quoted in G. C. Berkouwer, The Providence of God [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952], pp. 162,163).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which demands that truth be acted upon and that exhorts the believer to walk in truth. As J. Andrew Kirk has so well said: "A full practice of truth depends on a full revelation of truth. And the truth of revelation, because it depends upon God who reveals, is objectively true independently of whether it is believed and acted upon by man or not."[1] Nevertheless, the genuineness of the Christian's commitment to this revelation, just because it demands a consistent practice, will be judged by that practice and not simply on the basis of profession: "You shall know them by their fruits."[2]

It is proper, indeed indispensable, for experience to motivate our theology, as it is so clearly illustrated in the experience of Luther. No theology can be done in isolation from history. The balance that should be present between text and context is well expressed by William Hordern:

> Theology, by its very nature, stands poised between the Scriptural message on one hand and a particular historical situation on the other. Because theology is rooted in Scripture, there is, in all true theology, an unchanging element. It points to Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. But if theology were only biblical, there would be no need for it. We could simply read the Bible. If theology's one foot is planted firmly in the Bible, the other foot must be planted in the world. Theology is the attempt to relate the eternal Gospel message to the age in which it lives.[3]

---

[1]"The Meaning of Man in the Debate between Christianity and Marxism. Part 2," Themelios 1 (1976):91.

[2]Matt 7:20.

[3]"The Theology of Hope in America," LQ 21 (1969):

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

We must go to the Bible with our own questions, but we should be careful not to let them determine to what extent we should listen to the Bible. Some parts of Scripture may not speak as directly as we might wish to our existential concerns. From this we should not assume that the Bible is irrelevant. It might very well be that we have not yet asked the right questions. Consequently, we should be willing to listen to Scripture even where it has not yet occurred to us to enquire. The danger of finding in Scripture only the echo of one's own voice, of finding "one's own face at the bottom of the exegetical well," even when it is the besetting temptation of all exegetes, is particularly present in a theology that commits itself to certain praxis before going to Scriptures.

Praxis theology, due to its *a priori* commitments, also runs the risk of being too selective in its use of Scripture, often insisting almost exclusively on themes such as the Exodus and poverty.[1] It is hoped that

---

342. See further on this topic Helmut Thielicke, How Modern Should Theology Be? (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 1-19; Clark H. Pinnock, "An Evangelical Theology: Conservative and Contemporary," CT 23 (1979):407-13; and Charles R. Taber, "The Limits of Indigenization in Theology," Missio 6 (1978):53-79. Taber offers seven suggested criteria which he sees as universally normative for Christian theology.

[1]Juan Luis Sequndo wrote in 1974: ". . . los cristianos de la naciente teología de la liberación experimentaron cierta prisa. . . . Como se tenía que responder 'hoy mismo' a las preguntas que planteaba cada situación de lucha, se simplificaban las reflexiones e

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

liberation theology will correct this weakness and give more centrality to Scripture, for only a strong emphasis on the normativeness of God's word can keep us from bondage to pragmatism and bring divine insight to bear on the confusing social situation of our times. Scripture contains "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints,"[1] and in the neglect of this norm the Christian faith runs the risk of losing its identity in the concrete situation. Conversely, however, neglect of the concrete situation may lead the Christian faith to lose itself in cultural irrelevancy. The ever-present tension between irrelevancy and reductionism in Christian theology has been well described by Jürgen Moltmann:

> The Christian life of the theologians, Churches and human beings is faced more than ever with a double crisis: The *crisis of irrelevance* and the *crisis of identity*. These two crises are complementary. The more theology and the Church attempt to become relevant

---

inclusive se tendía a extraer de la Biblia episodios frases que sirvieran como slogans aplicables al espíritu de liberación inmediata que animaba a los cristianos. Se centraba la atención en ciertos pasajes de la Escritura, como el Éxodo, y se desechaban otros que no parecían encuadrar en los intereses explícitos de la teología de la liberación" (Quoted by Vekemans, "Panorámica Actual," p. 14). No Bible student is free from this ever present danger; however, when liberation theologians insist that the socio-historical context of the oppressed provides a hermeneutical key for discovering a "canon within the canon," their criticism of European and North American theologians for doing the same in order to defend, whether consciously or not, their own oppressive societies, is greatly weakened (Sider, "A Symposium of Responses," pp. 58,59).

[1] Jude 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> to the problems of the present day, the more deeply they are drawn into the crisis of their own Christian identity. The more they attempt to assert their identity in traditional dogmas, rights and moral notions, the more irrelevant and unbelievable they become.[1]

Each generation standing in its particular moment of history must search the Scriptures in order to discern the will of God, and strive to receive guidance toward the obedient life that must be pursued within concrete issues of the world.[2]

Man

The rooting of praxis in economic or social struggle has its deeper roots in the Renaissance view of man in which man was seen, not as a sinner, but as essentially a good creature who was destined to become better. By the eighteenth century a major shift had already occurred in the symbolism of salvation, from a theocentric to an anthropological focus. This was "a downward shift from the city of God to the city of Man, from an eschatological view of salvation in which God is the sole source of salvation to a this-worldly humanistic focus on human happiness and social welfare."[3] Man is seen as capable

---

[1] The Crucified God. The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology (London: SCM Press, 1974), p. 7.

[2] See Brevard S. Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), p. 131.

[3] Braaten, "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation," p. 121.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of regenerating himself by his own power; salvation becomes increasingly a human project, subject to human planning and praxis, projected on utopian possibilities inherent in the world. Liberation theology has basically attempted to define salvation within the framework of this world view. This may be the reason why little attention, if any, is given to a salvation that is viewed above and beyond history.

Man is assumed to be basically good. While the basic character of sin as rebellion against God is not denied, liberation theologians tend to look at the root of sin through its branches in the oppressive structures of society. Sin is not considered as an individual, private, interior reality; it is "regarded as social, historical fact."[1] Consequently, since sin is basically social and horizontal, salvation is also located in the historical, social realm. The good news of liberation is aimed primarily at the structural problems of injustice, poverty, inequality.[2]

---

[1]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 175.

[2]The World Council of Churches, which has adopted to a large extent the perspectives of liberation theology, has also abruptly shifted its emphasis from vertical to horizontal issues, from theological questions to involvement in the world. At Bangkok, for instance, while the personal and eternal dimensions of salvation are mentioned (see Bangkok Assembly 1973, pp. 87,90), the emphasis definitively falls on horizontal issues. Reflecting on the W.C.C. in Bangkok, whose theme was "Salvation Today," Donald McGavran observed that "the World Council is making a massive effort to reinterpret the classic meaning of that aim [to further the proclamation of the Gospel to all

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

While the broadening of the concept of sin to include the social dimension is a welcome corrective to an excessive privatizing tendency, liberation theology's overall view of sin remains, nevertheless, superficial. The analysis of the roots of injustice and the causes of alienation implicit in much liberation theology is so uniformly Marxist that no justice is done to the depth of the Biblical perspective of the human condition. While acknowledging that man is created in the image of God and that this image is reflected even in man's fallen state, it is also true that sin distorts and impairs man's reasoning powers and perverts his will. The human heart is not good or morally neutral, but "more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick."[1] According to the Bible, sin is prideful revolt against God;[2] it provokes the wrath of God;[3] it is slavery to Satan;[4] it is a disease of the whole person;[5] it brings death.[6] Because

---

men that they may believe and be saved] so that 'being saved' will come to mean having more food, more justice, more clothes, more freedom, more production, less disease, more brotherhood, more peace, in short, *more this-worldly improvements*" ("Salvation Today," Ralph Winter, ed., The Evangelical Response to Bangkok [Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973], p. 17). "Liberation Is In, the Unreached Out in Melbourne View of the Kingdom," is the title of an article written by Arthur F. Glasser (CT 24 [1980]:474-76) assessing the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism that met in Melbourne, Australia, in May 1980.

[1]Jer 17:9; Rom 7:18. [2]Gen 3: Rom 5:14.

[3]Rom 1:18. [4]Rom 6:16. [5]Isa 1:6.

[6]Rom 6:13. The Second Vatican Council raised a repeated warning regarding the nature of sin. It spoke

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

man is "curved in on himself" there is nothing he can do to deliver himself from his sinful state. Sin is a state of corruption so profound that the elimination of poverty, oppression, racism, sexism, capitalism, were it possible, would not alter man's basic condition in any significant way. The separation of man from God, expressed in Genesis 3, will not be bridged in an utopian classless society while man remains unchanged. As Pope Paul VI so insightfully observed:

> . . . The best social structures and the most idealistic systems can quickly become inhuman if the human inclinations of man are not healed, if there is no conversion of the heart and mind on the part of those who live in those structures or who direct them.[1]

Man's Works

Liberation theology derives its anthropology from Gen 1, where man is presented as working in harmony with his Creator. However, this high view of man should not be isolated from the more somber picture found in Gen 3 and make its anthropology solely normative in the understanding of human activity. After man's nature was distorted by sin, his participation in liberating activities does not necessarily indicate a coincidence of the human

---

of a "basic imbalance in the heart of man" (*Gaudium et Spes* art. 10); "his intelligence . . . is partially obscured and weakened" (art. 15); "man's freedom has been damaged by sin" (art. 17); "sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment" (art. 13).

[1]*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, art. 36. A copy of this encyclical can be found in TPS 21 (1976):4-51.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with the divine intent. Once, we must remember, man's works led to Babel[1] and later to the erection of the golden calf.[2] This does not mean that human liberating work should be renounced, but rather that if, in carrying it forward, stress is placed on man's struggle for self-emancipation, it--in the words of Norman J. Young--"expects too much and too little--too much of man who consistently turns his creative capacities to destructive ends; too little of God who comes from beyond man's own sphere of management to offer new directions and possibilities."[3]

Phrases like "God acts in history" or He acts "in the real world" are often found in liberation literature. When the strategies for liberation are considered, however, liberation theology often speaks of acting as though God were absent from history: everything depends on man.[4] Praxis means a new kind of action to change the world. Salvation is a hope for which man is to fight with all his might, otherwise it will never come; or, if it does, it will come, at best, through a synergism o divine grace and good works. The Biblical affirmations of *sola gratia* and *sola fide* for fear that they might lead to a salvation by cheap grace and thus take the pressure off Christians to do something concrate to change the

---

[1]Gen 11:1-9 [2]Exod 32.

[3]Creator, Creation and Faith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 190.

[4]Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, pp. 159, 307.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

social situation, are all but ignored.[1] But works-righteousness is as dangerous as cheap grace and can negate the Gospel not only in the form of works of piety but also in the modern forms of revolutionary praxis.[2]

Evangelical soteriology takes its stand squarely on the doctrine of justification by faith. *Sola gratia* is the essence of evangelical religion. This indeed is also the essence of the Gospel, "since grace is procured for the human race only by the costly sacrifice of Christ, who satisfied and fulfilled the demands of the law by his sinless life and agonizing death."[3] Salvation, like the Exodus, is totally the work of God. There is no room for any type of Pelagianism.

---

[1]See Carl E. Braaten, The Flaming Center. A Theology of the Christian Mission (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 152. Sölle concedes that "there is a certain anti-Protestant point in the theses that salvation is liberation" ("Resistance: Toward a First World Theology," p. 180). Segundo is more specific: "Since the time of the Reformation at least, the characterizing feature of the Catholic Church in this area is its emphasis on the *merit* of human endeavors for *gaining entrance* to the eternal kingdom of God. And this notion of merit is of the utmost importance for liberation theology" (The Liberation of Theology, p. 131). On the other hand, "the disappearance of the notion of *merit* from Protestant theology, dating from the time of the Reformation, seems to have undermined the possibility of any theology of history" (p. 142).

[2]Liberation theology emphasizes a socialist salvation, an earthly kingdom which shares the classical liberal vision of a society built on the principles of freedom, justice, and brotherhood.

[3]Donald G. Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 2:250.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Justification, however, has too often been depicted as wholly extrinsic, a totally forensic transaction; and the fact that the Holy Spirit is also active in justification, enabling the sinner to respond, believe, and obey[1] has been ignored. Justification by faith is often understood as the antithesis of salvation by works. Yet according to Scripture faith does not exclude works but gives rise to works. As Paul testified: "Through whom [Jesus Christ our Lord] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake."[2]

Social Responsibility

Gutiérrez often raises his concerned voice against his own church for having, to a large extent, neglected the fundamental social dimension of the Gospel in its all-absorbing concentration on the spiritual and the beyond. Evangelical Christians cannot with good conscience plead "innocent" to a similar charge. They have also often proclaimed a cheap grace that offered the forgiveness

---

[1] 1 Pet 1:2,22.

[2] Rom 1:5; Eph 2:8-10; Jas 2:2. Gutiérrez, and liberation theologians in general, do not pay enough attention to the Pauline doctrine of justification and its place in a total biblical view of salvation. Perhaps greater attention to the Pauline notion of *works of faith* (1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:11) and *works of law* (Rom 3:20,28) could provide a view of salvation which does not reduce the need of engagement in the struggle for justice while maintaining the element of grace and the priority of divine initiative (Kapp, "A Preliminary Dialogue," p. 28).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of the Gospel without the discipleship claims of the Gospel.[1]

There is ample evidence, however, that Evangelicals are awakening to the need for a whole Gospel and are honestly reassessing their position vis-à-vis society in the light of Scriptures.[2] One of the clearest expressions of this new consciousness among Evangelicals was the International Congress of World Evangelization held in Lausanne in 1974.[3] It drew a vigorous but balanced statement against horizontalist excesses:

---

[1]See Robert D. Linder, "The Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern" in David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds. The Evangelicals, What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), pp. 189-200, for a discussion of the issues that led Evangelicals to a more individualistic approach to religion after WWI. It was during that time, when in this country the "liberals" were turning outward armed with the concept of the Kingdom of God on earth, that the "conservatives" were turning inward, defensive, by the battle over evolution, the application of the critical-historical method to the Bible, and the attack on religion by Marx, Freud, and others. Timothy L. Smith in Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), argues that during the nineteenth century, however, evangelicals were at the forefront of the social battle, fighting against poverty, slum housing, racial intolerance, and inhuman working conditions. See esp. chapters 10 and 11.

[2]One of the key documents in evangelicalism's emerging social conscience doubtless was Carl F. H. Henry's The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947). See also Linder, "The Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern (1925-75)," pp. 189-210; Robert K. Johnston, Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 77-112.

[3]This Congress was not organized by the W.C.C. With representatives from more than 150 nations, the participants expressed "penitence both for our neglect of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without work is dead.[1]

There is a new realization in Evangelical circles that the call to repentance present in the Gospel includes a turning away from sin in *all* its dimensions, personal as well as social. Sider brings this issue into perspective when he observes that:

> Evangelicals regularly insist that coming to Jesus excludes continued lying and adultery. If that does not compromise *sola gratia*, then neither will a biblical insistence that coming to Jesus will necessarily include repenting of one's involvement in

---

our Christian Social responsibility and for our naive polarization in having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive" (John Stott, The Lausanne Covenant. An Exposition and Commentary [Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975], p. 25).

[1]Ibid. There is, nevertheless, a lack of consensus within the evangelical community in regard to the kind, nature, and extent of social involvement. See Sider, "Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice," pp. 251-55 for a discussion of five conflicting viewpoints on this issue among evangelicals. See also Johnston, Evangelicals at an Impasse, pp. 82-94, where he discusses current evangelical diversity as embodied in the philosophy of four leading evangelical periodicals: Moody Monthly, Christianity Today, The Reformed Journal, and Sojourners.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> institutional racism and economic injustice and working for less racist and less unjust societies.[1]

The ministry of Jesus, as presented in the Gospels, was a ministry to the whole person; no dimension of the good news was overlooked or considered unimportant. Matthew summarizes His ministry as follows:

> And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming [preaching, NIV] the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.[2]

He did not limit his ministry either to the "vertical" or to the "horizontal" dimension, but attended to all the people. The Gospels are full of stories about Jesus' feeding the hungry *and* His teachings about spiritual food, His healing the sick *and* His offer of personal salvation, His comforting the heavy-laden *and* His invitation to carry His cross, His restoring sight to the blind *and* His teaching that He is the light that shines in darkness, His resurrection of the dead *and* His claim that He is the way, the truth and the life.[3]

---

[1]"Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice," pp. 265,266. It would seem Jeremiah was beaten and put in jail because he stood up against the hypocrisy of his own people (Jer 20); Elijah risked his life when he challenged the prophets of Baal and denounced King Ahab and his wife (1 Kgs 18; 2 Kgs 1); Nathan courageously faced King David in the Bathsheba affair (2 Sam 12); Micah thundered against the oppressive rulers of the house of Israel (Mic 3); and Isaiah clearly condemned the religious, social, and economic evils of his time (Isa 1-6). See Richard J. Coleman, Issues of Theological Conflict: Evangelicals and Liberals (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 233,234.

[2]Matt 4:23; 9:35.

[3]Coleman, Issues of Theological Conflict, p. 246. The Gospel provides no indication either theoretically or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This ought not to mean that teaching, preaching, and healing are identical tasks. They should not be confused, but none should be omitted.[1]

Consequently, even when the vertical and horizontal dimensions are not interchangeable, yet they belong indivisibly together, they cannot be separated. The union of these two dimensions as two aspects of our total calling has far reaching consequences both for the Christian and the Church's conduct in the world. It leaves no room for the tendency to oscillate between the two extremes in which the Gospel is seen as essentially concerned with God's saving action in the life of individuals, and the interpretation of it as mainly concerned with human relationships in the world. Wilhem A. Visser't Hooft remarks:

> A Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt and is not only insipid in itself, but useless for the world. But a Christianity which would use the vertical preoccupation as a means to escape its responsibility for and in the common life of man is a denial of the incarnation of God's love for the world manifested in Christ.[2]

Evangelicals must still resolve in a practical way the

---

by space devoted to each that Jesus considered preaching more important than teaching or healing the sick, and when He chose to devote vast amounts of time to healing the sick, He was doubtless aware that those bodies would again succumb to sickness and death.

[1]See Sider, "Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice," pp. 258,259.

[2]Norman Goodall, ed., The Uppsala Report 1968 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968), p. 318.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interrelationship between the horizontal and the vertical. If evangelism has priority, does that mean that social involvement must be relegated to a second plane? Sider, after discussing five different viewpoints on this issue, offers a sixth option: "Evangelism and social action are equally important, but quite distinct aspects of the total mission of the church."[1] While Jesus' concern was not one-sided and embraced man in his total existence and he often gave priority to man's temporal needs, yet he made clear that man's eternal welfare must take precedence over the temporal. Evangelism has theological priority over social service, though not always chronological priority.

The "rediscovery" of the Biblical perspective on social concerns should at the same time remind us that anxiousness to be "where the action is" may easily lead to dubious involvements in politics, if we forget that Jesus rejected both the politics of the Sadducees and the revolutionary violence of the zealots in his ministry on behalf of the whole man.[2] And it is true that the world into which Jesus came was in many ways very similar to

---

[1]"Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice," p. 264. Sider is clear in stating that the New Testament evidence does not encourage a broad definition of salvation: "Sin is too all pervasive to warrant the application of 'salvation' language to the limited, imperfect, albeit extremely important social justice that does emerge in the time before the eschaton" (p. 263).

[2]Yoder's The Politics of Jesus is an excellent treatment of how Jesus dealt with the established system.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ours: there was poverty and oppression, internal institutions were oppressive, and the people were subject to foreign dominance. The Jews longed for political and economic liberation. They were anxious to make Jesus king. It was their mistaken expectations that blinded them to God's central purpose. For Jesus, the prospects of an earthly kingdom were nothing but a temptation of the devil to distract Him from His real mission. His kingdom was not of this world.[1]

In an age when secularists and atheists are actively engaged in social programs, it is vital for Evangelicals not to sacrifice the offensive nature of the Gospel in order to make it more acceptable, inoffensive, to the humanist mind.

Moreover, Jesus' "strategy" should not be ignored: it is from a good tree that good fruit proceeds.[2] Man must be changed spiritually before he can change at all.[3] Works of love are fruits, evidences of transformed lives. They spring from a grateful response to divine love offered

---

[1]John 18:36. As R. F. Bailey said, commenting on John 6:15, when Jesus rejected the attempt of the enthusiastic multitude to make Him king: "[there is] much of S. John's irony in the passage; He who is already King has come to open His kingdom to men; but in their blindness men try to force Him to be the kind of king they want; thus they fail to get the king they want, and also lose the kingdom He offers" (Quoted by Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], pp. 346,347).

[2]Matt 7:20.

[3]John 3:1-13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to sinners at the cross. It was after the Holy Spirit had descended with transforming power at Pentecost that the early Christians became motivated to eliminate poverty from their midst. "It is natural to feel Christ's liberation reaching into every kind of bondage and to want to act in accordance with that radical shift."[1]

The Exodus

Finally, liberation theology, in its efforts to encourage the abandonment of immobilist attitudes on the part of Christians, uses preferentially the Exodus as a model for liberation. But in doing so, attention is often focused on peripheral agents of liberation, such as the civil disobedience of the midwives, the violent protest of Moses. In doing so, the central message of the Exodus, i.e., that deliverance of the suffering and powerless Hebrew slaves was an act of the sovereign initiative of God, through which He chose to demonstrate His goodness and bring salvation to the nations, is often overlooked.

The Exodus, strained from its overall Biblical context, is reduced to an isolated story and used as a slogan to move the masses to political involvement, forgetting that "the political overtones of Israel's deliverance are part of the whole biblical message."[2] If

---

[1]Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, p. 190.

[2]Childs, The Books of Exodus, p. 214.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Exodus is used to promote human liberation insofar as it concerns human rights and social justice, the whole theological thinking behind it should also be considered, namely, that while the human element is not ignored, it is God and not man who changes situations. The story itself hardly suggests the legitimacy of an uprising by the oppressed, and, by violent means if necessary, grabbing control from those in power. Neither does modern history show its advisability. The abiding symbol that comes to us from the Exodus is not a clenched fist, inviting to struggle and revolt, but rather a lamb that was slain, and blood "on the two doorposts."[1]

There are, besides the Exodus, other models in the Old Testament that suggest how Christians should live in situations of adversity and injustice. Jeremiah advises the exiles living in oppression in Babylon to live constructively and even pray for the welfare of Babylon, "for in its welfare you will have welfare."[2] The same principle is present in Joseph's experience in Egypt, in Daniel's under Nebuchadnezzar. Far from destroying the oppressor, Israel was called to be a preserver of life, God's agent of blessing to the world. What really was expected from Israel is beautifully embodied in the experience of the young girl captive in the

---

[1]Exod 12:7; 1 Cor 5:7.

[2]Jer 29. See Yoder, "Exodus and Exile," p. 306.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

household of Naaman the Syrian. The nations had no answer for the leprosy of her master. But this young Israelite knew that God was present in Israel in the person of Elisha. "Although taken captive and enslaved by the worldly power, she freely bears witness to Yahweh's saving presence in Israel, not even bargaining for her own release in exchange for this stupendous 'gospel'."[1]

The Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, indicates that God has chosen to accomplish His redemptive purpose in history through a covenant people. It is through the presence in history of the people of God, "a city set on a hill,"[2] serving as a preview of the new age, that others are to be attracted to God, embrace the Gospel, and live its reality here as "salt of the earth" and "light of the world."[3]

This divine strategy is clearly portrayed in the life and work of Jesus: He created around Himself a new society, a different society, with a mission to change the world. This society was mixed in composition. It was mixed racially, religiously, economically.[4] And Jesus Himself gave this community a new way of life. Yoder expresses it well:

---

[1]Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation," p. 146.

[2]Matt 5:14. [3]Matt 5:13,14.

[4]See Yoder, The Original Revolution. Essays on Christian Pacifism (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), p. 29.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> He gave them a new way to deal with offenders--by forgiving them. He gave them a new way to deal with violence--by suffering. He gave them a new way to deal with money--by sharing it. He gave them a new way to deal with problems of leadership--by drawing upon the gift of every member, even the most humble. He gave them a new way to deal with a corrupt society--by building a new order, not smashing the old.[1]

No one can be truly free until Christ has made him free.[2] Only then is he able to extend a helping hand to those who groan under the heavy burden of sin; those who consciously or unconsciously long for liberation--a liberation that does not exhaust itself in the temporal but projects itself beyond history to the eschatological intervention of Jesus Christ. As the bishops at Puebla expressed it:

> In a word, our people yearn for a full and integral liberation, but not confined to the realm of temporal existence. It extends beyond that to full communion

---

[1]Ibid. The unknown author of the Epistle to Diognetus, a second century document, presents forcefully the nature of the Christian faith: "inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. . . . They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the law by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. . . . They are poor, yet make many rich. . . . They are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. . . . Yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred" (Ad Diog. 5 [ANF 1:26,27]).

[2]John 8:30.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with God and one's brothers and sisters in eternity. And that communion is already beginning to be realized, however, imperfectly, in history.[1]

---

[1]"Final Document," art. 141.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ADDENDUM

After this dissertation had been completed, it was our privilege to attend a series of three lectures on liberation theology that Gustavo Gutiérrez presented at Notre Dame University, July 1-3, 1981, as well as to converse with him privately for a couple of unforgettable hours. Gutiérrez is a friendly, congenial man, one of those rare persons who can disagree without being disagreeable.

Despite the fact that ten years have passed since the appearance of A Theology of Liberation, the core of his thought remains virtually unchanged: God's preference for the poor, and theology as a second act. A shift can be observed, however, at the level of emphasis. He appeared more subdued on several vital points, e.g., his stress on Marxism as "one option, not the only one"; the impossibility of "a perfect society on this earth"; violence at best as only "the lesser of two evils." Regarding our query that the soteriology he develops in A Theology of Liberation appeared to be too tied to history, he agreed that his case could have been strengthened had he given more attention to the transcendent, which to a certain extent he "took for granted."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abalos, David. "The Medellin Conference." Cross Currents 19 (1969):113.

Abbot, Walter M. The Documents of Vatican II. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966.

Alba, Víctor. The Latin Americans. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1969.

Alexander, John F. "Weakness and Power. Why Our Strength and Might Are Perfectly Irrelevant in God's Plan." The Other Side (October 1979): 11-14.

Alexander, Robert J. "The Emergence of Modern Political Parties in Latin America." In John Maler and R.W. Weatherhead, eds. Politics of Change in Latin America. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Pub., 1964.

Alonso, Antonio. Iglesia y praxis de liberación. Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1974.

Altizer, Thomas J. The Gospel of Christian Atheism. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.

Alves, Rubem A. Christianismo, Opio o liberacion? Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1973.

Anderson, Bernhard. "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1-11." Journal of Biblical Literature 97 (1978):23-39.

Anderson, Bernhard. Creation Versus Chaos. New York: Association Press, 1967.

Anderson, Gerald H., and Stransky, Thomas F., eds. Mission Trends No. 3. Third World Theologies. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.

Anderson, Gerald H., and Stransky, Thomas F., eds. Mission Trends No. 4. Liberation Theologies in North America and Europe. New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Anderson, Justo C. "Un análisis de la teología de la liberación." Diálogo teológico 12 (1978):7-28.

Ansons, Gunar. "Ecumenism under Tension: Evangelicals versus Socio-Political Forces." Lutheran World 22 (1975):199-212.

Antoncich, Ricardo. "The Church's Social Doctrine at Puebla." Lumen Vitae. International Review of Religious Education 24 (1979):349-379.

Arias, Mortimer. "Contextual Evangelization in Latin America: Between Accomodation and Confrontation." Occasional Bulletin (January 1978):19-28.

Arias, Mortimer. Salvación es liberación. Buenos Aires: Editorial La Aurora, 1973.

Aristoter Politics. In The Works of Aristoth. Chicago: William Benton, Publishers, 1952.

Armerding, Carl E., ed. Evangelicals and Liberation. Baker Book House: 1977.

Arroyo, Gonzalo. "Violencia institucionalizada en América Latina." Mensaje 17(1968):534-544.

Assmann, Hugo. Opresión-Liberación. Desafío a los cristianos. Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1971.

Assmann, Hugo. Practical Theology of Liberation. London: Search Press Limited, 1975.

Assmann, Hugo. Theology for a Nomad Church. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Assmann, Hugo, et al. Cristianos por el socialismo. Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1973.

Aubert, Roger. The Church in a Secularized Society. Vol. 5: The Christian Centuries. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Avila, Rafael. Teología, evangelización y liberación. Bogota: Ediciones Paulinas, 1973.

Bahmann, Manfred K. "A Bibliography of Latin America." Lutheran Quarterly 22 (1970):99-100.

Bahmann, Manfred K. "Liberation Theology-Latin American Style." The Lutheran Quarterly 27 (1975):139-148.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bailey, R. F. Cited in Leon Morris. The Gospel According to John. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971.

Balasuriya, Tissa. The Eucharist and Human Liberation. New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

Banana, Canaan. "The Biblical Basis for Liberation Struggles." International Review of Mission 68 (1979):417-423.

Baran, Paul, and Sweezy, Paul. Monopoly Capital. An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1966.

Barbieri, Sante Umberto. Land of Eldorado. New York: Friendship Press, 1961.

Barney, Gerald O., ed. The Global 2000 Report to the President. 3 vols. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980.

Barr, James. "The Bible as a Political Document." Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 62 (1980):268-289.

Barr, James. "Revelation Through History in the Old Testamanet and in Modern Theology." Interpretation 17 (1963):193-205.

Bassham, Roger C. Mission Theology: 1948-1975 Years of Worldwide Creative Tension. Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979.

Bauckham, Richard J. "Universalism: A Historical Survey." Themelios 4 (1979):48-54.

Baum, Gregory. "Canadian Bishops Adapt Liberation Theology." Cross Currents 28 (1978):97-103.

Baum, Gregory. "Attack on the New Social Gospel." The Ecumenist 17 No. 6 (1979):81-84.

Baum, Gregory. "German Theologians and Liberation Theology." The Ecumenist 16 (1978):49-51.

Bedrossian, Roberto. Marxismo y salvación. Buenos Aires: Junta Bautista de Publicaciones, 1973.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Beegle, Dewey M. Moses, the Servant of Yahweh. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972.

Bennet, John C. "Fitting the Liberation Theme into Our Theological Agenda." Christianity and Crisis (July 18, 1977):164-169.

Bennet, John C. The Radical Imperative. From Theology to Social Ethics. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975.

Berger, Peter L. Pyramids of Sacrifice. Political Ethics and Social Change. New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1974.

Berkhof, Hendrik. Christ the Meaning of History. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966.

Berkhof, Hendrik. Christ and the Powers. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1962.

Berkouwer, G. C. A Half Century of Theology. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977.

Berkouwer. The Providence of God. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952.

Berkauwer, G. C. The Return of Christ. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972.

Berkouwer, G. C. The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965.

Berryman, Phillip. "Christians for Socialism." Journal of Ecumenical Studies 9 (1972):948-950.

Berryman, Phillip. "Latin American Liberation Theology." Theological Studies 34 (1973):35-395.

Berryman, Phillip. "Popular Catholicism in Latin America." Cross Currents 21 (1971):284-301.

Beyerhaus, Peter. Bangkok 73: The Beginning or End of World Mission? Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974.

Beyerhaus, Peter. Mission: Which Way? Humanization or Redemption? Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.

Bianchi, Eugene. "Points of Convergence in the Christian-Marxists Dialogue." Encounter 36 (1975):37-52.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bierck, Harold A. Latin American Civilization: Reading and Essay. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967.

Bigo, Pierre. The Church and Third World Revolution. New York: Orbis Books, 1977.

Bigo, Pierre. "Enseñanza de la iglesia sobre la violencia." Mensaje 17 (1968):574-578.

Blanchette, Olioa. "Philosophy and Theology in Aquinas: On Being a Disciple in Our Day." Science and Esprit 28 (1976):23-53.

Blanco, Guillermo. El evangeloi de Judas. Santiago: Pineda Libros, 1973.

Blanco-Fombona, Rufino. El conquistador español del siglo XVI. Madrid: Editorial Mediterraneo, 1956.

Bloesch. Essentials of Evangelical Theology. 2 vols. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979. 2:250.

Bloesch, Donald G. "Soteriology in contemporary Christian Thought." Interpretation 35 (1981):132-144.

Bock, Paul. In Search of a Responsible Society. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974.

Bockmuehl, Klaus. The Challenge of Marxism. A Christian Response. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1980.

Boecker, Hans Jochem. Law and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

Boerma, Conrad. The Rich, the Poor, and the Bible. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979.

Boff, Leonardo. Jesus Christ Liberator. A Critical Christology for Our Times. New York: Orbis Books, 1978.

Boff, Leonardo. "La iglesia es el sacramento de liberacion." Proceso 118 (February 1979):11.

Boff, Leonardo. "Salvation in Jesus Christ and the Process of Liberation." Concilium (June 1974): 78-91.

Boice, James M. "Was Jesus a Revolutionary?" Eternity 23 (February 1972):20-22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Boman, Thorleif. "The Biblical Doctrine of Creation." Church Quarterly Review 165 (1964):140-151.

Bonino, José Míguez. Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Bonino, Jose Miguez. "Five Theses toward an Understanding of the 'Theology of Liberation.'" Expository Times 8 (1975-76):198.

Borrat, Hector. "Liberation Theology in Latin America." Dialog 13 (1974):172-176.

Botterweck, G. Johannes. "*ebhyon*." Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974.

Braaten, Carl E. "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation." Interpretation 35 (1981):117-131.

Braaten, Carl E. The Flaming Center. A Theology of the Christian Mission. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

Braaten. New Directions in Theology Today. Vol. 2 of History and Hermeneutics. Philedelphia: Westminister Press, 1967.

Braaten. "Toward a Theology of Hope." Theology Today 24 (1967, 8):208-226.

Bravo, Carlos. "Notas marginales a la teología de la liberacion." Ecclesiastica Xeveriana 1 (1974): 3-60.

Breneman, J. Mervin, ed. Liberación, Exodo y Biblia. El concepto biblico de liberación. Miami: Editorial Caribe, 1975.

Bright, John. The Authority of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977.

Bright, John. A History of Israel. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977.

Brockman, James. "Preparation for Puebla." America 40 (1979):49-50.

Brown, Robert McAfee. "Context Affects Content. The Rootedness of All Theology." Christianity and Crisis (July 18, 1977):170-174.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Brown, Robert McAfee. "From Detroit to Nairobi and Beyond: The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches." Radical Religion 2:4 (1976):45-48.

Brown, Robert McAfee. Gustavo Gutiérrez. Makers of Contemporary Theology. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980.

Brown, Robert McAfee. Is Faith Obsolete? Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974.

Brown, Robert McAfee. Theology in a New Key. Responding to Liberation Themes. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978.

Bruce, Frederick F. New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1968.

Buber, Martin. Moses, the Revelation and the Covenant. New York: Harper and Bros., 1958.

Bülhmann, Walbert. The Coming of the Third Church. New York: Orbis Books, 1977.

Butler, Gerald A. "Political Theology: An Appraisal." Religious Life 42 (1973):206-211.

Butterworth, Robert. The Theology of Creation. Indiana: Fides Publishing, 1969.

Cabal, Hugo Latorre. The Revolution of the Latin American Church. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

Calvin, John. Cited in Commentary on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of Harmony. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1950. 1:47.

Calvez, Juan-Yves, and Perrin, Jacques. The Church and Social Justice. The Social Teachings of the Popes from Leo XVIII to Pius XII. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1961.

Camara, Helder. "Celam: History Is Implacable." Cross Currents 28 (1978):55-59.

Camara, Helder. The Desert Is Fertile. Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1974.

Camara, Helder. Revolution through Peace. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Camara, Helder. "What Would St. Thomas Aquinas Do if Faced with Karl Marx?" New Catholic World (May-June, 1977):108-113.

Cassuto, Umberto. A Commentary on the Book of Exodus. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967.

Castro, Americó. "El pueblo espanol." In Spanish Literature since the Civil War. Edited by Beatrice Pratt and Martin Noziek. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1973.

Castro, Americó. La realidad historica de Expana. Rev. 3rd ed. Mexico City: Editorial Porrua, 1966.

Castro, Americó. The Spaniards: An Introduction to Their History. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Castro, Emilio. Amidst Revolution. Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1970.

Castro, Emilio. Quoted in Roberto Sartor, "Exodo-Liberación." Revista Biblica Argentina 33 (1971):76.

Castro, Emilio. Hacia una revolucion reponsable. Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1970.

Castro, Emilio. "Liberation, Development, and Evangelism: Must We Choose in Mission?" Occasional Bulletin (July 1978):87-90.

Castro, R. Barón. "La población hispanoamericana, 1442-1950." Cuadernos de la historia mundial. Vol. 5. New York: UIVESCO, 1959.

Castuera, Ignacio. "Theology and Practice of Liberation in the Mexican-American Context." Perkins School of Theology Journal 29 (1975):2-11.

Caudron, Marc, ed. Faith and Society. Brussels: J. J. Duculot, S. A., 1978.

Cerny, Jaroslav. Ancient Egyptian Religion. London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952.

Chiclote, Ronald H., and Edelstein, Joel C., eds. Latin America: The Struggle with Dependence and Beyond. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974.

Childs. Biblical Theology in Crisis. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Childs, Brevard S. The Book of Exodus, A Critical Theological Commentary. Philadelphia: Westminster Press: 1974.

Childs, Brevard S. "A Traditional-Historical Study of the Red Sea Tradition." Vetus Testamentum 20 (1970):406-418.

Clements, Ronald E. Old Testament Theology. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1978.

Clements, Ronald E. Prophecy and Covenant. Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1965.

Clines, D. J. A. "Themes in Genesis 1-11." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 38 (1976):483-507.

Coats, George W. "Moses in Midian." Journal of Biblical Literature 92 (1973):3-10.

Coleman, Richard J. Issues of Theological Conflict: Evangelicals and Liberals. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972.

Collins, Denis. Paulo Freire, His Life, Works and Thought. New York: Paulist Press, 1977.

Collins, John P. "The 'Historical Character' of the Old Testament in Recent Biblical Theology." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 41 (1979):185-204.

Colonnese, Luis M. The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council. Washington, D. C.: Division for Latin America. United States Catholic Conference, 1973.

Colonese, Louis M., ed. Conscientization for Liberation. Arlington, Va.: Goodway Printing Co., 1971.

Comblin, José. The Church and the National Security State. New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

Comblin, José. "The Church in Latin America After Vatican II." Latin America Documentation 7 (January/February 1977):1.

Comblin Joseph. "The Bishops' Conference at Puebla." Theological Digest 28 (1980):9-12.

Cone. "Asian Theology Today: Searching for Definitions." The Christian Century 96 (1979):589-591.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cone, James. A Black Theology of Liberation. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970.

Cone, Harvie M. "Teología de la liberación." Diálogo teologico 12 (1978):51-58.

Conway, Robert. "Latin America's Pattern: How the Church Has Changed." National Catholic Reporter February 9, 1979, p. 19.

Cooper, John W. "The Cuban Revolution: An Exchange. A Challenge from John Bennett." Christianity and Crisis 40 (1980):203-206.

Cosmao, Vicente. "Towards a Theology of Development." International Documentation Service 5 (June 13, 1970):86-96.

Costas, Orlando E. The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World. Wheaton: Tyndale House Pub., 1974.

Costas, Orlando E. "Liberation Theology: A Solution?" The Mennonite 93 (1978):434.

Costas, Orlando E. Theology of the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, N. V., 1976.

Cottier, Georges. Esperanzas enfrentadas: cristianismo y marxismo. Bogota: CEDIAL, 1975.

Cox, Harvey. The Secular City. New York: Macmillian Pub. Co., 1975.

Cox, Harvey, ed. The Church Amid Revolution. New York: Association Press, 1967.

Cox, Harvey, and Faith A. Sand. "What Happened at Puebla?" Christianity and Crisis (March 19, 1979):57-60.

Croatto, J. Severi. "Dios en el acontecimiento." Revista Bíblica 35 (1973):52-60.

Croatto, J. Severi. Exodus: A Hermeneutics of Freedom. New York: Orbis Books, 1981.

Croatto, J. Severi. Liberación y libertad. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Mundo Nuevo, 1973.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cross, Frank Moore. "Yahwah and the God of the Patriarchs." Theological Review 55 (1962):225-259.

Cullman, Oscar. Salvation in History. Londoni SCM Press, 1967.

Cuschieri, Antony. "The Christian-Marxist Encounter." Cross Currents 27 (1977):279-298.

Czery, Michail. "Puebla: Step into the 1980's." Ecumenist 18 No. 1 (1979):1-5.

Daly, Mary. Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

Daube, David. The Exodus Pattern in the Bible. London: Faber and Faber, 1963.

David, John G. Christians, Politics and Violent Revolution. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1976.

David, Harold E. Revolutionaries, Traditionalists, and Dictators in Latin America. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1973.

Davies, Charles. "Theology and Praxis." Cross Currents 23 (1973):154-168.

Davis, John G. Christians, Politics and Violent Revolution. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Davis, Harold E. Latin American Thought. A Historical Introduction. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1972.

Davis, Harold E. Revolutionaries, Traditionalists and Dictators in Latin America. New York: Cooper Square Pub., 1973.

Davis, John J. Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in the Book of Exodus. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971.

Dehainaut, Raymond K. Faith and Ideology in Latin American Perspective. Cuernavaca: Centro Intelectual de Documentacion, 1972.

DeWitt, Dale S. "The Historical Background of Genesis 11:1-9: Babel or Ur?" JETS 22 (1979):15-26.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Djilas, Milovan. The New Class. An Analysis of the Communist System. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Pub., 1957.

Doukhan, Jacques B. "The Literary Structure of the Genesis Creation Story." Th.D. disseration, Andrews University, 1978.

Dussel, Enrique. "Domination-Liberation: A New Approach," Concilium (June 1974):34-56.

Dussel, Enrique. Ethics and the Theology of Liberation. New York: Orbis Books, 1974.

Dussel, Enrique. Historia de la iglesia en América Latina. Barcelona: Editorial Nova Terra, 1972.

Dussel, Enrique. History and the Theology of Liberation: A Latin American Perspective. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Dussel, Enrique. "The Kingdom of God and the Poor." International Review of Mission 68 (1979):115-130.

Dussel, Enrique. "Sobre la histroia de la teología en América Latina." In Enrique Ruiz Maldonado, ed. Liberación y cautiverio. Debates en torno al métado de la teología de la liberación. Mexico City: Comite Organizador, 1975.

Dyson, A. O. "Dogmatic or Contextual Theology?" Study Encounter 29 8 (1972).

Eagleson, John, and Scharper, Philip, eds. Puebla and Beyond. Documentation and Commentary. New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

Eichrodt, Walter. Theology of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961. 1:292.

Elizondo, Virgilio P. "A Challenge to Theology: The Situation of the Hispanic Americans." The Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention. New York: Manhattan College, 1975.

Elliot, Charles. "Cultural Foundations for Economic Development." The Ecumenical Review 19 (1967): 277-381

Elwood, Douglas, ed. Asian Christian Theology of What Asian Christians Are Thinking. Rev.ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Engelhard, David H. "The Lord's Motivated Concern for the Underprivileged." Calvin Theological Journal 15 (1980):5-26.

Erdozain, Luis. "The Evolution of Catechetics. A Study of Six International Study Week Catechetics." Lumen Vitae 25 (1970):30.

Escobar, Samuel, and Driver, John. Christian Mission and Social Justice. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1978.

Fagg, John Edwin. Latin America: A General History. New York: MacMillan Co., 1963.

Fals-Borda, Orlando. Quoted in Denis Goulet. A New Moral Order: Studies in Development Ethics and Liberation. MaryKnoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1974.

Fensham, Charles. "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature." Journal of Near Eastern Studies 21 (1962):129.

Ferm, Deane William. "South American Liberation Theology." Religion in Life 48 (1979):474-491.

Fierro, Alfredo. The Militant Gospel. A Critical Introduction to Political Theologies. New York: Orbis Books, 1974.

Fiorenza, Francis P. "Latin American Liberation Theology." Interpretation 28 (1974):441-457.

Fisher, Fred L. "The New and Greater Exodus: The Exodus Pattern in the New Testament." Southwestern Journal of Theology 20 (1977):69-79.

Fisher, Loren. "From Chaos to Cosmos." Encounter 26 (1965):183-197.

Ford, Paul Leicester, ed. Writings of Christopher Columbus: Description of the Discovery and Occupation of the New World. New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1892.

Francisco, Clyde T. "The Exodus in Its Historical Setting." Southwestern Journal of Theology 20 (1977):7-20.

Frank, Andre G. Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Frankfort, Henri. Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Frankfort, Henri. Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man. Harmondsworth: Heath and Co., 1951.

Frankfort, Henri. Kingship and Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.

Franklin, John Hope. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans. 3rd ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967.

Free, Joseph P. Archaeology and Bible History. Wheaton: VanKampen Press, 1950.

Freedman, David Noel. "The Burning Bush." Biblica 50 (1969):245,246.

Freedman, David Noel. "The Name of the God of Moses." Journal of Biblical Literature 79 (1960):151-156.

Frei, Hans N. The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermaneutics. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Seabury Press, 1970.

Frostin, Per. "Modern Marxist Critique or Religion--A Survey." Lutheran World 20 (1973):141-154.

Fulton, Justin. "Liberation Theology and the New Face of Evangelicalism." Biblical Theology 27 (1977): 29-42.

Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. Rev. 2nd ed. Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1963.

Furtado, Celso. Obstacles to Development in Latin America. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970.

Gabaldón Márquez, Joaquín. El conquistador español del siglo XVI. Madrid: Ediciones Mediterráneo, 1956.

Galeano, Eduardo. Open Veins of Latin America. Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent. New York, London: Monthly Review Press, 1973.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Galilea, Segundo. "Between Medellin and Puebla." Cross Currents 28 (1978):71-78.

Galilea, Segundo. "Liberation as an Encounter with Politics and Contemplation." Concilium (June 1974): 19-33.

Galilea, Segundo. "The Theology of Liberation. A General Survey." Lumen Vitae. International Review of Religious Education 33 (1978):331-353.

Garaudy, Roger. "Christian-Marxist Dialogue." Journal of Ecumenical Studies 4 (1967):207-222.

Gargan, Edward T., ed. Leo XIII and the Modern World. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.

Geaney, D. J. "Catholic Action." New Catholics Encyclopedia. 3:262.

Geffre, Claude. "Editorial: A Prophetic Theology." Concilium (June 1974):7-16.

Geffre, Claude. A New Age in Theology. New York: Paulist Press, 1974.

Gerstenberger, Erhard. "Covenant and Commandment." Journal of Biblical Literature 84 (1965):38-51.

Gheddo, Piero. Why Is the Third World Poor? New York: Orbis Books, 1973.

Gibbs, Eddie. "The Theology of Revolution." Frontier (Autumn 1973):141-145.

Gibeau, Dawn, and Lernoux, Penny. "U.S. Press Errs in Summarizing Pope at Puebla." New Catholic Review, February 16, 1979, pp. 10, 39.

Gibellini, Rosino, ed. Frontiers of Theology in Latin America. New York: Orbis Books.

Gilkey, Langdon. "Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language." The Journal of Religion 41 (1961):194-205.

Gilkey, Langdon. Reaping the Whirlwind. A Christian Interpretation of History. New York: The Seabury Press, 1976.

Girardi, Giulio. Amour Chrétien et violence révolutionnaire. Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1970.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Glasser, Arthur F. "Liberation Is In, the Unreached Out in Melbourne View of the Kingdom." Christianity Today 24 (180):474-476.

Goldicke, Hans. Review in Evangelical Newsletter, May 19, 1981.

Goldingay, John. "The Man of War and the Suffering Servant. The Old Testament and the Theology of Liberation." Tyndale Bulletin 17 (1976):79-113.

Gollwitzer, Helmut. "Liberation in History." Interpretation 28 (1974):404-421.

González, Diluis. "Encounter of the Church with the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America." Pro Mundi Vita (English ed.) 52 (1974):3.

González Ruiz, José María. The New Creation: Marxist and Christian? New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

González, Justo L. A History of Christian Thought. 3 vols. Nashvile: Abingdon Press, 1975.

González, Justo L., and González, Catherino G. Liberation Preaching. The Pulpit an the Oppressed. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980.

Goodwin, Bennie E. "Education as Liberation: An Analysis of Paulo Freire." Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center 2 (1975):88-89.

Gort, J. D. "Gospel for the Poor?" Missiology: An International Review 7 (1979):325-354.

Gottwald, Norman K. The Tribes of Yahweh. A Sociology of Religion of Liberated Israel. MaryKnoll, N. Y., 1979.

Goulet, Denis. "The World of Underdevelopment." The Christian Century 91 (1974):452-455.

Grau, José. El reino de Dios y su naturaleza. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Certeza, 1972.

Greenberg, Moshe. "Hebrew *segullah*: Akkadian *sikiltu*." Journal of the American Oriental Society 71 (1951): 172-174.

Gremillion, Joseph. The Gospel of Peace and Justice. Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Griffen, C. C. "The Enlightenment and the Latin American Independence." In Arthur P. Whitaker Latin America and the Enlightenment. New York: Cornell University Press, 1961.

Griffin, David Ray. "North Atlantic and Latin American Liberation Theologians." Encounter 40 (1979): 17-30.

Griffin, Keith. Underdevelopment in Spanish America: An Interpretation. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969.

Griffiths, Brian, ed. Is Revolution Change? Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1972.

Groome, Thomas Henry. Toward a Theory Method of Liberating Catechesis. Ed.D. Dissertation. Columbia University Teachers College, 1976.

Gudorf, Christine E. Catholic Social Teaching on Liber-tion Themes. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1980.

Gudorf, Christine E. "Historical Change and Conceptions of Justice: Papal Social Teaching 1922-77." Union Seminary Quarterly Review 33 (1978):91-100.

Guicciardine, Francisco. Quoted in J. Fred Rippey, Latin America: A Modern History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968.

Gunday, Stanley, and Johnson, Alan, eds. Tensions in Contemporary Theology. Chicago: Moody Press, 1973.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Contestation in Latin America." In Jimenez Urresti, ed. Contestation in the Church. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. Cristianismo y Tercer Mundo. Bilbao: Colección Pueblo de Dios, 1973.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Faith and Freedom: Solidarity with the Alienated and Confidence in the Future." Horizons 2 (1975):25-60.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. La fuerza historica de los pobres: Seleccion de trabajos. Lima: CEP, 1979.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Lo importante es la liberacion, no la teologia." Proceso (February 5, 1979):9-11.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "The Hope of Liberation." In Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas Stransky. Mission Trends No. 3: Third World Theologies. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Liberation and Development." Cross Currents 21 (1971):143-156.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation." Concilium (June 1974):57-77.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Notes for a Theology of Liberation." Theological Studies 31 (1970):243-261.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "The Praxis of Liberation and the Christian Faith." Lumen Vitae 29 (1974):373-400.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Statement by Gustavo Gutierrez." In Sergio Torres and John Eagleson, eds. Theology in the Americas. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. A Theology of Liberation. History, Politics and Salvation. New York: Orbis Books, 1973.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. "Where Hunger Is, God Is Not." The Witness 60 (April 1977):5.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo; Alves, Rubem; and Assmann, Hugo. Religion Instrumento de liberacion? Madrid: Editorial Fontanella, S. A., 1973.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo, and Shaull, Richard. Liberation and Change. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977.

Gutiérrez, Juan. The New Liberation Theology. Pitfalls of the Theology of Liberation. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977.

Habegger, Howard J. "Toward Doing Justice in Christian Missions." Mission Trends 8 (1980):1-9.

Hall, Douglas John. Has the Church a Future? Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Hals, Ronald M. Grace and Faith in the Old Testament. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980.

Ham, Adolfo.. "Introduction to the Theology of Liberation." Communio Viatorum 16 (1973):113-120.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hamilton, Kenneth. God Is Dead: The Anatomy of a Slogan. Grand Radips: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966.

Hanke, Lewis. The Spanish Struggle For Justice in the Conquest of America. Philadelphia: University of Pennylvania Press, 1949.

Hardy, Friedham. "Despair and Hope of the Defeated--Andear Messianism." Religious Studies 11 (1975): 257.

Harrison, Beverly Wildung. "Challenging the Western Paradigm. The 'Theology of the Americas' Conference." Christianity and Crisis 35 (1975):254.

Harrison, Roland K. Introduction to the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969.

Hasel, Gerhard F. "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology." The Evangelical Quarterly 46 (1974): 81-102.

Hasel, Gerhard F. "The Problem of History in Old Testament Theology. Andrews University Seminary Studies 8 (1970):23-50.

Hauerwas, Stanley. "Messianic Pacifism." Worldview June (1973):19-33.

Hay, Lewis S. "What Really Happened at the Sea of Reeds?" Journal of Biblical Literature 83 (1964):397-403.

Hayes, Carlton J. H. A Generation of Materialism, 1870-1900. New York: Harper and Bros., 1941.

Hebblethwaite, Peter. "Christians and Instrumental Marxism." The Month (November 1975):312-317.

Heckel, Roger. "On the Actuality of the Church's Social Doctrine and Practice." Lumen Vitae International Review of Religious Education 33 (1978):57-65.

Heidel, Alexander. The Babylonian Genesis. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Heinitz, Kenneth. "The Eschatological and the Political in Moltmann's Theology." Concordia Theological Monthly 43 (1972):368-375.

Hellwig, Monika. "Liberation Theology: An Emerging School." Scottish Journal of Theology 30 (1977): 137-151.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hemming, John. Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Hendricks, Barbara. "What Is Evangelization?" Missiology: An International Review. 6 (1978):409-424.

Hendry, George S. "Eclipse of Creation." Theology Today 28 (1971-72):407-405.

Hengel, Martin. Christ and Power. Philedelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

Hengel, Martin. Victory over Violence. Jesus and the Revolution. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973.

Hengel, Martin. Was Jesus a Revolutionist? Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973.

Hennelly, Alfred T. "The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo." Theological Studies 38 (1977):125-135.

Hennelly, Alfred T. "Theological Method: The Southern Exposure." Theological Studies 38 (1977):709-735.

Hennelly, Alfred T. Theologies in Conflict. The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo. New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

Hennelly, Alfred T. "Today's New Task: Geotheology." America 132 (1975):27.

Hennelly, Alfred T. "Who Does Theology in the Americas?" America 33 (1975):137, 139.

Henry, Carl F. H. Frontiers in Modern Theology. A Critique of Current Theological Trends. Chicago: Moody Press, 1964.

Herring, Hubert. History of Latin America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.

Herzog, Frederick. "Liberation and Imagination." Interpretation 32 (1978):227-240.

Herzog, Frederick. "Liberation Hermeneutic as Ideology Critique?" Interpretation 28 (1974):387-403.

Herzog, Frederick. Liberation Theology: Liberation in the Light of the Fourth Gospel. New York: Seabury Press, 1972.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hoekema, Anthony A. "Already, Not Yet: Christian Living in Tension." Reformed Journal 29 (January 1979): 15-18.

Holdsworth, Philip. "The Liberation of Theology." The Month (November 1975):317-321.

Holwerda, David E. "Liberation and Theology." The Banner (March 23, 1979):4-5.

Honeycutt, Ray Lee. "Exodus." The Broadman Bible Commentary. 12 vols. Nashville: Broadman Press. 1:405.

Hondern, William. Christianity, Communism and History. New York: Abingdon Press, 1954.

Hondern, William. New Directions in Theology Today. Vol. I: Introduction. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.

Hondern, William. "The Theology of Hope in America." The Lutheran Quarterly 21 (1969):342-351.

Hort, Greta. "The Plagues of Egypt." Zeischrift Fur Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 69 (1957):84-104; 70 (1958):48-59.

Howell, Leon. "The Geopolitics of 'Aid': The Poorest Rank Lowest." Christianity and Crisis (May 18, 1979): 142-144.

Hudson, Michael. "Latin America's Role in U.S.-European Diplomacy." Cross Currents 21 (1971):303-319.

Hyatt, Phillip. Commentary on Exodus. New Century Bible. London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1971.

Jacob, Edmond. Theology of the Old Testament. New York: Harper and Row, 1958.

Janzen, Waldemar. "War in the Old Testament." Mennonite Quarterly Review 46 (1972):155-166.

Jerome, Gail S. "American Labor in Latin America." Cross Currents 21 (1971):

"Jesus the Liberator?" Time, September 1, 1975, p. 34.

John Paul II, Pope. "Builders of a Just Society." The Pope Speaks 26 (1981):80.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

John Paul II, Pope. "Politics No, Justice Yes, Pope Tells Latin America." Our Sunday Visiter, February 11, 1979, p. 1.

Johnson, Robert F. "Moses." Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962. 3:445.

Johnson, Robert K. Evangelicals at an Impasse. Biblical Authority in Practice. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979.

Johnstone, William. "The Exodus as Process." The Expository Times 91 (1980):358-363.

Jones, Gwilym H. "Holy War" or "Yahweh War?" Vetus Testamentum 25 (1975):642-658.

Juderías, Julián. La leyenda negra. Estudios acerca del concepto de España en el extranjero. Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1974.

Kaiser, Walter C. Toward an Old Testament Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978.

Kamazawa, Yoshinohu. "Asian Theological Reflections on Liberation." North East Asia Journal of Theology 14 (March 1975):1-9.

Kantzer, Kenneth, and Gundry, Stanley, eds. Perspectives on Evangelical Theology. Papers from the Thirtieth Annual Meeing of the Evangelical Theological Society. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.

Kaplan, Marcus. "Economic Aspects of the Latin American Crisis." In Luis M. Calonnesse, ed. Conscientization for Liberation. Washington D. C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1971.

Kaplan, Marcos. Social Justice and the Latin American Church. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966.

Kaufman, Gordon D. "On the Meaning of 'Act of God'" Harvard Theological Review 61 (1968):175-201.

Kee, Alistair, ed. A Reader in Political Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974.

Kee, Alistair. The Scope of Political Theology. London: SCM Press, 1978.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Keen, Benjamin. Readings in Latin-American Civilization: 1492 to the Present. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967.

Keil, C. F., and Delitzsh, F. Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978. 1:17.

Kelley, Page. Exodo: Llamados a una misión redentora. El Paso: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1977.

Kelsey, David H. The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Kerans, Patrick. Sinful Social Structures. New York: Paulist Press, 1974.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "The Bible in Latin American Liberation Theology." In Norman Gottwald, ed. The Bible and Liberation. Berkeley: Community for Religious Research and Education, 1976.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "Hermenéutica bíblica y hombre nuevo." Revista Bíblica 36 (1974):47-58.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "The Inherent Failures of Marxism." Missionalia 6 (1978):67-77.

Kirk, J. Andrew. Liberation Theology. An Evangelical View from the Third World. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "Marxism and the Church in Latin America." Missionalia 6 (1978):27-45.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "The Meaning of Man in the Debate Between Christianity and Marxism. Part 2." Themelios 1 (1976):41-49.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "The Meaning of Man in the Debate Between Christianity and Marxism. Part 2." Themelios 1 (1976):85-93.

Kirk, J. Andrew. "A New Theology from Latin America." The Churchman 88 (1974):108-115.

Kirk, J. Andrew. Theology Encounters Revolution. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1980.

Kirkpatrick, Don. "What U.S. Protestants Need from CELAM III." Cross Currents 28 (1978):90-96.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Kliever, Lonnie D. The Shattered Spectrum. A Survey of Contemporary Theology. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981.

Kloppenburg, Bonaventure. Christian Salvation and Human Temporal Progress. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979.

Kloppenburg, Bonaventure. The People's Church: A Defense of My Church. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978.

Knight, George A. F. Law and Grace. London: SCM Press, 1962.

Kress, Robert. "Theological Method: Praxis and Liberation." Communio. International Catholic Review 6 (1979): 113-134.

Kuhn, Harold B. "Editorial." The Ashbury Seminarian 37 (1979):3.

Kuhn, Harold B. "Liberation Theology: A Semantic Approach." Wesleyan Theological Journal 15 (1980):34-45.

Kumazawa, Yoshinobu. "Three Types of 'Liberation Theology.'" The South East Asia Journal of Theology 16 No. 2 (1975):31-39.

Kung, Hans. On Being a Christian. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1976.

Ladd, George E. A Theology of the New Testament. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974.

Laje, E. J. "La 'teológía de la liberación' segun Gustavo Gutierrez," Stromata 3 (1973):297-306.

Lakelands, Paul. "Hoping against Hope: A Latin American Christology." The Month (November 1980):373-377.

Lakelands, Paul. "Responding to Liberation Theology. Interaction of Faith and Social Commitment." The Month (January 1980):12-15.

Lamb, Matthew. "The Theory. Praxis Relationship in Contemporary Christian Theology." Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Thirty-First Annual Convention. New York: Manhattan College, 1976.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lambolay, Lathryn. "Leo XIII. 'the Worker's Pope," Favored Unions." New Catholic Review, September 7, 1979, p. 37.

Landes, George. "Creation and Liberation." Union Seminary Quarterly Review 27 (1978):79-89.

Landsberger, Henry A., ed. The Church and Social Change in Latin America. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.

Lane, Darmont E. Ireland Liberation and Theology. New York: Orbis Books, 1977.

Langan, John. "Liberation Theology in a Northern Context." America (January 27, 1979):46-49.

Las Casas, Barto Lomé de. The Devastation of the Indies': A Brief Account. New York: Seabury Press, 1974.

Las Casas, Bartolomí de. History of the Indies. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971.

Latorre Cabal, Hugo. The Revolution of the Latin American Church. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. Three Centuries of Advance. vol. 3: A History of the Expansion of Christianity. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1939.

Laurentin, Rene. Liberation Development and Salvation. New York: Orbis Books, 1972.

Lefever, Ernest W. "The WCC: An Uneasy Alliance Between God and Marx?" Christianity Today (September 7, 1979):25-28.

Leishman, Thomas Linton. The Interrelation of the Old and New Testament. New York: Vantage Press, 1968.

León, Correa. El Concilio Plenario Latinoamericano de 1899: Cathedea. Bogotá: n.p., n.d.

Lernoux, Penny. "The Long Path to Puebla." In Puebla and Beyond: Documenation and Commentary. Edited by John Eagleson and Philip Sharper. MaryKnoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lernoux, Penny. "'Yankee Go Home.' A 10-part Investigation into Multinationals in Latin America." The National Catholic Reporter (A reprint from these 1979 issues: January 12, 19, 26; February 2, 23; March 2, 16, 23; April 20, 27.

Leupold, H. C. Exposition of Genesis. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953.

Levine, Daniel H., ed. Churches and Politics in Latin America. Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1979.

Libanio, J. B. "Celam III: Fears and Hopes." Cross Currents 28 (1979):20-33.

Lind, Millard C. Yahweh Is a Warrior. The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1980.

Linder, Robert D. "The Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern." In The Evangelicals, What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing. Edited by David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975.

Linton, Calvin D. "Man's Difficulty--Ignorance or Evil?" Christianity Today 9 (1964-5):18-20.

Lochman, Jan Milic. Reconciliation and Liberation. Challenging a One-Dimensional View of Salvation. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

Loffler, Paul. "Mission in Context: In Search of a Theological Perspective on Development." Theological Review 2 (November 1979):17.

Lonergan, Bernard J. F. Method in Theology. New York: Herder and Herder. 1972.

López Trujillo, Alfonso. Liberación marxista y liberación cristiana. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1974.

López Trujillo, Alfonso. Liberation or Revolution? An Examination of the Priest's Role in the Socio-economic class Struggle in Latin America. Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1977.

Lucas, A. "The Number of the Israelites at the Exodus." Palestine Exploration Quarterly (1944):164-168.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

McCann, Dennis P. Christian Realism and Liberation Theology. Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict. New York: Orbis Books, 1981.

McCarthy, Dennis J. "Israel, My First-Born Son." The Way 5 (1965):183-191.

McCarthy, Dennis J. "Moses' Dealings with Pharaoh: Ex 7, 8-10, 27." Catholic Biblical Quarterly 27 (1965):336-347.

McCarthy, Dennis J. Old Testament Covenent: A Survey of Current Opinion. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1972.

McCarthy, Dennis J. "Plagues and the Sea of Reeds: Exodus 5-14." Journal of Biblical Literature 85 (1966):137-158.

MacCarthy, Gerald. "The Politics of 'Puebla 1979.'" The Month (February 1979):39-40, 63.

MacCarthy, Gerald. "What Really Happened at Puebla?" The Month (March 1979):77-79, 98.

MacEoin, Gary. "Books about Latin America." Cross Currents (1971):352.

MacEoin, Gary. "Marx with a Latin Beat." Cross Currents (1971):269-275.

MacEoin, Gary. Revolution Next Door. Latin America in the 1970s. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

MacEoin, Gary, and Riley, Nivita. Puebla: A Church Being Born. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.

McFadden, Thomas, ed. Liberation, Revolution and Freedom: Theological Perspectives. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

MacKay, John A. The Other Spanish Christ. A Study in the Spiritual History of Spain and South America. London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932.

Macke, Steven G. "Praxis as the Context for Interpretation. A Study of Latin American Liberation Theology." Journal of Theology for South America 24 (1978):32-33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

McKenzie, John L. A Theology of the Old Testament. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1974.

MacKenzie, Roderick A. F. "Before Abraham Was. . . ." The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 15 (1953):130-140.

MacKenzie, Steve. "Exodus Typology in Hosea." Restauration Quarterly 22 (1979):100-108.

McLean, J. H. The Living Christ for Latin America. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board Publication, 1976

Macquarrie, John. "Creation and Environment." The Expository Times 83 (1972):4-9.

Machovec, Milan. A Marxist Looks at Jesus. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Madariaga, Salvador de. The Rise of the Spanish American Empire. New York: Macmillan Co., 1947.

Maldonado, Enrique Ruiz, ed. Liberación y cautiverio: Debates en torno al método de la teología de America Latina. México City: Comité Organizador, 1975.

Maly, Eugene H. "Genesis." The Jerome Bible Commentary. 2 vols. Edited by Raymond Brown. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1968. 1:10.

Mann, Thomas W. "The Pillar of Cloud in the Red Sea Narrative." Journal of Biblical Literature (1971): 15-30.

Maritain, Jacques, ed. True Humanism. 6th ed. London: Goffrey Bless, and New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954.

Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederich. The Communist Manifesto. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964.

Maust, John. "The Exploding Hispanic Minority: A Field in Our Back Yard." Christianity Today 24 (1980): 883-909.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Means, Phillip Ainsworth. "The Native Background in Latin American History, pp. 67-115. In A. Curtis Wiglus, ed. Colonial Historic American. New York: Russel and Russel, 1968.

Mecham, J. Lloyd. Church and State in Latin America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966.

Meeks, M. Douglas. Origins of the Theology of Hope. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

Mejía, Jorge. "La liberación. Aspectos bíblicos: Evaluación critica." In Liberacion: Diálogos en el CELEM. Bogota: Secretariado General del CELEM, 1974.

Mendenhall, George E. Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East. Pittsburg: Biblical Colloquium, 1955.

Menéndez Pidal, Ramón. El P. Las Casas y vitoria. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1966.

Metz, Johannes B. "Hope for a 'New Reformation. Christianity in a Post-bourgeois World." The Month 242 (1981):92-98.

Metz, Johannes. "Political Theology." Sacramentum Mundi 5 (1970):247-252.

Metz, Johannes B. Theology of the World. New York: Herder and Herber, 1969.

Metz, René, ed. Liberation Theology and the Message of Salvation. Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978.

Micks, Marianne H. Introduction to Theology. New York: The Seabury Press, 1964.

Migliore, Daniel L. Called to Freedom: Liberation Theology and the Future of Christian Doctrine. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

Míguez Bonino, José. Christians and Marxists. A Mutual Challenge to Revolution. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976.

Míguez Bonino, José. Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Míguez Bonino, José. Espacio para ser hombres. Buenos Aires: Tierra Nueva: 1975.

Míguez Bonino, José. "Five Theses Toward Understanding the 'Theology of Liberation.'" The Expository Times 87 (1976):196-200.

Míguez Bonino, José. Jesús: Ni vencido ni monarca celestial. Buenos Aires: Tierra Nueva, 1977.

Míguez Bonino, José. "Theology and Liberation." International Review of Mission 61 (1972):67-72.

Míguez, Néstor O. "Solidarity with the Poor." The Ecumenical Review 31 (1979):261-262.

Millard, A. R. "A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story." Tyndale Bulletin 18 (1967):3-18.

Miller, Patrick D., Jr. The Divine Warrior in Early Israel. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Miranda, José Porfirio. Being and the Messiah. New York: Orbis Books, 1977.

Miranda, José Porfirio. Marx and the Bible. A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression. New York: Orbis Books, 1974.

Mitchell, John J. "Abraham's Understanding of the Lord's Covenant." Westminster Theological Journal 32 (1969):24-28.

Mojzes, Paul. "Christian-Marxist Dialogue: Soviet and American Style." Cross Currents 29 (1978):159-166.

Moltmann, Jürgen. The Crucified God. The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology. London: SCM Press, 1974.

Moltmann, Jürgen. "The Liberation of Oppressors." The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center 6 (1979):69-82.

Moltmann, Jürgen. "An Open Letter to José Míguez Bonino." Christianity and Crisis (March 29, 1976):57-63.

Moltmann, Jürgen. "Politics and the Practice of Hope." Christian Century 10 (1970):289.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Moltmann, Jürgen. Theology of Hope. On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Montague, George T. "Hermeneutics and the Teaching of Scripture." The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 41 (1979):1-17.

Moor, Wilbert E., and Smesler, Neil J., eds. Catholicism, Social Control and Modernization in Latin America. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Morales Padrón, Francisco. Los conquistadores de América. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1974.

Moran, William L. "A Kingdom of Priests." In The Bible in Current Catholic Thought. Edited by John L. McKensie. New York: Herder and Herder, 1962.

Moreno, Fernando. Christianismo y marxismo en la teología de la liberación. Santiago: Escuela Litotipografica Salesiana, 1977.

Morris, Henry M. The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings. San Diego: Creation-Life Publications, 1976.

Morris, Leon. The Abolition of Religion. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1964.

Muilenburg, James. "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations." Vetus Testamentum 9 (1959): 347-365.

Mulligan, Joseph. Liberation for the Poor of Yahweh, Pharaohs and Christians. Portland: Sunburst Press, 1977.

Murray, Pauli. "Black, Feminist Theologies: Links, Parallels and Tensions." Christianity and Crisis (April 14, 1980):86-95.

Mutchler, David E. The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America. New York: Praeger Publ, 1971.

Myers, Jacob Martin. Grace and Torah. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

Nagy, Alex. "Presbyters and Chicanos: Toward a Full Partnership in Liberation." Louvain Studies 6 (1976):35-50.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Neely, Alan. "Liberation Theology in Latin America: Antecedents and Authochtony." Missiology: An International Review 6 (1978):343-370.

Neely, Alan. Protestant Antecedents of the Latin American Theology of Liberation. Ph.D. Dissertation. American University, 1977.

Neill, Stephen. "Salvation Today?" The Churchman 87 (1973):263-274.

Neuhaus, Richard J. "Liberation as Program and Promise: On Refusing to Settle for Less." Currents in Mission 2 (1975):90.

Neuhaus, Richard J. "Liberation Theology and the Captivities of Jesus." Worldview (June 1973):41-48.

Nichol, Francis D. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. 7 vols. Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1953-57.

Nicholls, Bruce J. Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1979.

Nicholson, Ernest W. Exodus and Sinai in History and Tradition. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973.

Nida, Eugene A. Understanding Latin Americans. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974.

Nolan, Albert. Jesus before Christianity. Mary Knoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1978.

Norman, Edward. Christianity and the World Order. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Noth, Martin. Exodus. A Commentary. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.

Núñez, Emilio. "Theology of Liberation in Latin "America." Bibliotheca Sacra 134 (1977):343-356.

Nystrom, J. Warren, and Javerstock, Nathan A. The Alliance for Progress. Key to Latin American Development. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1966.

O'Connor, June. "Process Theology and Liberation Theology: Theological and Ethical Reflections." Horizons 7 (1980):231-247.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ogden, Schubert M. Faith and Freedom: Toward a Theology of Liberation. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979.

Oliveros Maqueo, Roberto. Liberación y teología. Génesis y crecimiento de una reflexión 1966-1977. Lima: Gráfica Inclán, 1977.

Ortega, Rafael. Liberando la teología de la liberación. Bogotá: Ediciones Paulinas, 1978.

Osthathios, Gervarghese M. Theology of a Classless Society. New York: Orbis Books, 1980.

Padilla, C. René. "CELAM III: A Gospel of Freedom and Justice." Christianity Today 23 (1979):960.

Padilla, C. René, ed. El reino de Dios y América Latina. El Paso: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1975.

Padilla, C. René. "Revolution and Revelation." In Brian Geriffiths, ed. Is Revolution Change? Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1972.

Padilla, C. René. "The Theology of Liberation." Christianity Today 18 (1973):201.

El Padre Camiló: el cura guerrilleo. México City: Editorial Nuestra América, 1968.

Padrón, Franciso Moralés. Los conquistadores de América. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975.

Payne, D. F. Genesis One Reconsidered. London: Tyndale Press, 1962.

Pérez Esclarín, Antonio. Atheism and Liberation. New York: Orbis Books, 1978.

Perloff, Harvey S. Alliance for Progress. A Social Invention in the Making. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1969.

Peter, James. "Salvation History as a Model for Theological Thought." Scottish Journal of Theology 23 (1970):1-12.

Peters, George W. "Current Theological Issues in World Missions." Bibliotheca Sacra 135 (1978):253-262.

Petula, Joseph. Christian Political Theology. New York: Orbis Books, 1972.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pfeiffer, Charles F. Egypt and the Exodus. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964.

Pfeiffer, Charles F. Old Testament History. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973.

Phillips, Steven. The Use of Scripture in Liberation Theologies: An Examination of Juan Luis Segundo, James H. Cone, and Jurgen Moltmann. Ph.D. Dissertation. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1978.

Phythian-Adam's, William J. The Way of At-one-ment: Studies in Biblical Theology. London: SCM Press, 1944.

Picón-Sales, Mariano. De la conquista a la independencia. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1969.

Pidal, Ramón Menéndez. El p. Las Casas y Vitoria. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1966.

Piediscalzi, Nicholas, and Thobaben, Robert G. From Hope to Liberation: Towards a New Marxist-Christian Dialogue. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

Pike, Frederick B., ed. The Conflict Between Chruch and State in Latin America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.

Pinnock, Clark H. "An Evangelical Theology. Conservative and Contemporary." Christianity Today (January 5, 1979):23-29.

Pinnock, Clark H. "An Evangelical Theology of Human Liberation." Sojourners (February 1976):30-33.

Pinnock, Clark H. "An Evangelical Theology of Human Liberation." Part 2. Sojourners (March 1976): 26-29.

Pinnock, Clark H. "Liberation Theology: The Gains, the Gaps." Christianity Today (January 6, 1976):13-15.

Pinnock, Clark, and Wells, David, eds. Toward a Theology of the Future. Ill: Carol Stream: Creation House, 1971.

Pironio, Eduardo. "The Church in Latin America." Catholic Mind 73 (1975):34-44.

Plaza, Galo. Latin America Today and Tomorrow. Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1971.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Poblete, Renato. "The Church in Latin America: A Historical Survey." In Henry A. Landsberger, ed., The Church and Social Change in Latin America. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.

Poblete, Renato. "From Medellín to Puebla." Worldview (October 1978):27-30.

Poblete, Renato. "The Spanish Conquest on Settlement on the Indies." In A. Curtis Wiglus, ed. Colonial Historic America. New York: Russel and Russel, 1968.

Poole, S. "The Church and the Indian in Latin America." New Catholic Encyclopedia. 17 vols. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967. 4:447.

Prien, Hans-Jurgen. "Liberation and Development in Latin America." Luthern World 20 (1973):114-132.

Protchard, James B., ed. The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.

Proteous, Norman W. "The Care of the Poor in the Old Testament." In Living the Mystery: Collected Essays. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967.

Quigley, Thomas E. "Latin America's Church: No Turning Back." Cross Currents 28 (1978):79-89.

Quinn, G. J., and Davidson, J. D. "Theology: Sociology-Orthodoxy: Orthopraxis." Theology Today 32 (1976): 345-352.

Quintana, Carlos, ed. Development Problems in Latin America. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970.

Rad, Gerhard Von. "History and the Patriarchs." The Expository Times 72 (1961):213-216.

Rad, Gerhard Von. The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966.

Rahner, Karl. "The Lasting Significance of Vatican II." Theology Digest 28 (1980):221-225.

Rahner, Karl. Notes. Thedogy Digest 29 (1980):224.

Rahner, Karl. Theological Investigations. 12 vols. London: Daron, Longman and Todd, 1969-1974.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ramírez Toro, Everardo. Evangelio latinoamericano de la liberación. Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1976.

Ramm, Bernard. "The Theology of the Book of Exodus: A Reflection on Exodus 12:12." Southwestern Journal of Theology 20 (1977):59-68.

Ramos, Pablo. "New Light on the Pope in Mexico." The Month (April 1979):118-122.

Recker, Robert. "The Redemptive Focus of the Kingdom of God." Calvin Theological Journal 14 (1979):154-186.

Rendtorff, Rolf. "Subdue the Earth: Man and Nature in the Old Testament." Theology Digest 27 (1979):213-216.

Ressmeyer, Ruth B. "The Case for Women's Liberation in the Church." Currents in Theology and Mission 7 (1980):1-14.

Richard, Pablo. "The Latin American Church 1959-1978." Cross Currents 28 (1978):34-46.

Richard, Pablo. "Liberation Theology and Current Politics." LADOC International 7 (July-August 1977): 31-53.

Richard, Pablo. "Puebla: Hope for the Poor." Missiology: An International Review 7 (1979):287-293.

Ridderbos, Herman. The Coming of the Kingdom. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Refermed Publishing Co., 1962.

Rifkin, Jeremy, and Howard, Ted. The Emerging Order: God in the Age of Scarcity. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1979.

Ringgren, Helmer. "*ga'al*." Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975: 2:350-355.

Roberts, J. Deotis. A Black Political Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974.

Rockfeller, Nelson A. The Rockefeller Report on the Americas. The Official Report of a United States Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rodó, José Enrique. José Enrique Rodó: Obras Completas. Edited by Emir Rodriquez Monegal. Madrid: Aguilar, 1967.

Roger, Cleon L. "The Covenant with Abraham in Its Historical Setting." Bibliotheca Sacra 127 (1970: 241-256.

Rosenblat, Angel. La población indígena y el mestizaje en América. 2 vols. Buenos Aires: Editorial Nova, 1954.

Ross, Allan P. "The Dispersion of the Nations in Genesis 11:1-9." Bibliotheca Sacra 138 (1981):119-128.

Rowtow, Walt W. The States of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto. Cambridge: University Press, 1960.

Rowley, H. H. The Biblical Doctrine of Election. London: Lutterworth Press, 1950.

Rowley, H. H. The Growth of the Old Testament. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Ruether, Rosemary. "The Biblical Vision of the Ecological Crisis." The Christian Century 95 (November 22, 1978):1129-1132.

Ruether, Rosemary. Liberation Theology. Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power. New York: Paulist Press, 1972.

Ruiz Maldonado, Enrique. Liberación y cautiverio. Debates en torno al método de la teología en América Latina. México: Comité Organizador, 1976.

Ruler, Arnold Albert van. The Christian Church and the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971.

Russell, Letty M. The Future of Partnership. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979.

Russell, Letty M. Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective--A Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974.

Rycroft, W. Stanley. Religion and Faith in Latin America. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sahlin, Harold. "The New Exodus of Salvation According to St. Paul." In The Root of the Vine. Essays in Biblical Theology. Edited by Anton Fredrichsen. Westminster: Dacre Press, 1953.

Sanks, T. Howland, and Smith, Brian H. "Liberation Ecclesiology: Praxis, Theory, Praxis." Theological Studies 38 (1977):3-38.

Sanders, Thomas G. "The Theology of Liberation: Christian Utopianism." Christianity and Crisis 33 (1973): 167.

Santa Ana, Julio de. "The Influence of Bonhoeffer on the Theology of Liberation." Ecumenical Review 28 (1976):188-197.

Sapsezian, Aaron. "Ministry with the Poor." International Review of Mission 61 (1977):4.

Sarna, Nahum M. Understanding Genesis. New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1966.

Sartor, Roberto. "Exodo-Liberación. Tema de actualidad para una reflexión teológica." Revista Biblica 33 (1971):73-77.

Scannone, Juan Carlos. "Teología, Cultura popular y discernimiento." Revista del Centro de Investigación y Acción Social 237 (1974):10.

Scannone, Juan Carlos. "The Theology of Liberation--Evangelic or Ideological?" Concilium 3 (March 1974):147-156.

Scannone, Juan Carlos. "Various Latin American Interpretations of the Puebla Document. Lumen Vitae 35 (1980):353-369.

Schillebeeckx, E. "Liberation Theology between Medellin and Puebla." Theology Digest 28:1 (Spring 1980): 3-8.

Schmidt, K. "The Clergy and the Indendepence of New Spain." Hispanic American Historical Review 34 (1954):189-312.

Schooyans, Michel. "Evangélisation et libération." Nouvelle Revue Théologique 4 (1978):481-501.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Schooyans, Michel. "The Place of Human Rights in Catholicism." Lumen Vitae. Interantional Review of Religious Education 35 (1980):135-150.

Schramm, John E. "The Fifth Alternative: Nonviolence and the Socio-political Dimensions of the Church's Ministry." The Lutheran Quarterly 27 (1975): 149-155.

Scoff, Mark. A Survey of Catholic Theology - 1800-1970. New York: Paulist Newman Press, 1970.

Scott, Waldron. Bring Forth Justice. A Contemporary Perspective on Mission. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980.

Seeger, Daniel. "U. S. Pacifists and Third World Liberation Movements." Friends Journal (May 1, 1979): 2-7.

Segundo, Juan Luis. "Capitalism-Socialism: A Theological Crux." Concilium (June 1974):105-123.

Segundo, Juan Luis. "Fe e ideología." Perspectivas de diálogo 9 (1974):227-233.

Segundo, Juan Luis. The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action. New York: Orbis Books, 1978.

Segundo, Juan Luis. The Liberation of Theology. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Segundo, Juan Luis. "Social Justice and Revolution." America 118 (1968):576.

Segundo, Juan Luis. A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity. Quoted in David R. Peel, "Juan Luis Segundo, 'A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity': A Latin American Contribution to Contemporary Theological Understanding." Perkins School of Theology Journal 30 (Spring 1977):4,5.

Seltzer, Alexa. "Modern Old Testament Criticism." In The Jerome Bible Commentary. 2 vols. Edited by Raymond Brown. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1968. 2:590-604.

Shaull, Richard. "Revolutionary Change in Theological Perspective." In The Church Amid Revolution: A Selection of the Essays Prepared for the World Council of Churches. Geneva Conference on Church and Society. Edited by Harvey G. Cox. New York: Association Press, 1967.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sider, Ronald J. Christ and Violence. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1979.

Sider, Ronald J. Any Justice: The Bible Speaks on Hunger and Poverty. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1980.

Sider, Ronald J. "An Evangelical Theology of Liberation." The Christian Century (March 19, 1980):314-318.

Sider, Ronald J. "Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice." International Review of Mission 64 (1975):251-267.

Sider, Ronald J. "Reconciling Our Enemies. A Biblical Study of Nonviolence." Sojourners (January 1979): 14-17.

Sider, Ronald J. Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1977.

Silva Pereyra, Edgar. "Breve estudio analítico e crítico do ponto de partida da Teología da Liberacao." Prisma 42:2 (August 1980):28-40.

Simpson, Leslie B. The Encomienda in New Spain. Berkeley: University of California, 1966.

Simon, Arthur. Bread for the World. New York: Paulist Press, Grand Rapids: wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975.

Smith, Michael E. "Is Fighting Social Injustice the Main Business of the Church?" New Oxford Review (July-August 1979):4-9.

Smith, Ralph. "Covenant and Law in Exodus." Southwestern Journal of Theology 20 (1977):33-41.

Smith, Timothy L. Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America. Nashville: Abington Press, 1957.

Sobrino, Jon. Christology at the Crossroads. A Latin American Approach. New York: Orbis Books, 1978.

Sobrino, Jon. "A Quiet Affirmation of Medellin." Theological Digest 28 (1980):13.

Solle, Dorothee. Political Theology. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Solle, Dorothee. "Resistance: Toward a First World Theology." Christianity and Crisis (July 23, 1979):178-182.

Song, Choan-Seng. "Liberation of People in History." The South East Asia Journal of Theology 19:2 (1978): 14-25.

Song, Choan-Seng. "Statement of the Asian Theologians." Occasional Bulletin Missionary Research (July 1979): 99-101.

Soltis, Thomas. "Scientific Theology and the Miracle at the Red Sea." The Springfielder 38 (1974):55-59.

Sorensen, H. J. "Creation Account." New Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967. 4:424.

Stein, Stanley, and Stein, Barbara. The Colonial Heritage of Latin America. Essays on Economic Dependence in Perspective. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Stek, John H. "Salvation, Justice and Liberation in the Old Testament." Calvin Theological Journal 13 (1978):133-165.

Stevens Arroyo, Antonio M. Prophets Denied Honor. An Anthology on the Hispano Church of the United States. New York: Orbis Books, 1980.

Stott, John R. W. Christian Mission in the Modern World. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1975.

Stott, John R. W. The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary. Mineapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975.

Stover, Dalea A. "Kerygma and Praxis." Andover Newton Quarterly 19 (1978):111-120.

Strain, Charles R. "Ideology and Alienation: Theses on the Interpretation and Evaluation of Theologies of Liberation." Journal of the American Academy of Religion 45 (1977):473-490.

Stuphin, Stanley T. Options in Contemporary Theology. Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1977.

Taber, Charles R. "Is There More Than One Way to Do Theology?" Gospel in Context 1 (1978):4-10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Taber, Charles R. "The Limits of Indigenization in Theology." Missio 6 (1978):53-79.

Thant, U. Toward World Peace. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964.

Thielicke, Helmut. How Modern Should Theology Be? Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969.

Thiselton, Antony C. The Two Horizons. New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Speical Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980.

Thomas, George B. "Black Theology of Liberation." The Journal of the Inter-denominational Theological Center 7 (1979):40-53.

Tomes, Roger. "Exodus 14: The Mighty Acts of God." Scottish Journal of Theology 22 (1969):455-478.

Topel, L. John. The Way to Peace: Liberation Through the Bible. New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

Toro, Everardo Ramírez. Evangelio latinoamericano de la liberación. Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1976.

Torres, Camilo. Camilo Torres Revolutionary Writings. New York: Herder and Herder, 1969.

Torres, Sergio, and Eagleson, John, eds. Theology in the Americas. New York: Orbis Books, 1978.

Torres, Sergio, and Febella, Virginia, eds. The Emergent Gospel. New York: Orbis Books, 1976.

Traboulay, David. "Christianity and the Struggle for Justice in the New World." Zeitschrift fur Missionwissenshaft und Religionswissenshaft 59 (1975):94-111.

Tracy, David. Blessed Rage of Order: The New Pluralism in Theology. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

Uffenheimer, Benjamin. "Salvation in Exodus." Risk 9:3 (1973):27-30.

Unger, Merril F. Archeology and the Old Testament. Grand Radids: Londervan Publishing House, 1954.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

United Nations. Informe preliminar sobre la situacion social del mundo. New York: U.N. Publications, 1952.

Ureta, Floreal. "Algunas reflexiones acerca de la teología de la liberación." Diálogo teológico 12 (1978):29-35.

Vaux, Roland de. The Bible and the Ancient Near East. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1971.

Vawter, Bruce. The Conscience of Israel. Pre-exilic Prophets and Prophecy. New York:Sheed and Ward, 1961.

Vekemans, Roger. "Antecedentes para el estudio de la teología de la liberación." Tierra Nueva 3 (October 1972):5-19.

Vekemans, Roger. "Panorámica actual de la teología de la liberación en América Latina. Evaluacion crítica." Tierra Nueva (April 1, 1976):5-33.

Vekemans, Roger. Teología de la liberación y cristiano por el socialismo. Bogotá: CEDIAL, 1976.

Vekemans, Roger, and Silva, Ismael. Marginalidad, promoción popular y neo-marxismo. Bogotá: CEDIAL, 1976.

Verkuyl, J. Contemporary Missiology. An Introduction. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978.

Vidales, P. Raúl. La iglesia latino-americana y la política después de Medellin. Bogotá: Colecciones IMA, 1972.

Visser't Hooft, Wilhem A. The Uppsala Report 1968. Edited by Norman Goodall. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1968.

Vree, Dale. On Synthesizing Marxism and Christianity. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976.

Vriezen, Th. C. An Outline of Old Testament Theology. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970.

Wadtke, Bruce K. "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3. Part I: Introduction to Bible Cosmogony." Bibliotheca Sucra 132 (1975):25-36.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Wagley, Charles. The Latin American Tradition. Essays on the Unity and the Diversity of Latin American Culture. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

Wagner, Peter. Latin American Theology: Radical or Evangelical? Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970.

Waldaw, Von H. Eberhard. "Social Responsibility and Social Structure in Early Israel." Catholic Biblical Quarterly. 32 (1970):143-155.

Walzer, Michael. "Exodus 32 and the Theory of the Holy Way: The History of a Citation." Harvard Theological Review 61 (1968):1-14.

Wang, Joseph S. "Latin American Liberation Theology." The Asbury Seminarian 32 (1977):18-39.

Weber, Hans-Ruedi. "Freedom Fighter or Prince of Peace?" Study Encounter 8:4 (1972):1-24.

Weigel, Gustave. "Theology in South America." Theological Studies 9 (1948):561.

Weisheipl, James A. "Thomas' Evaluation of Plato and Aristotle." The New Scholastic 48 (Winter 1974): 100-124.

Wells, David F. The Search for Salvation. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1978.

Wells, David F., and Pinnock, Clark H., eds. Toward a Theology of the Future. Carol Stream: Creation House, 1971.

Wenham, J. W. "Large Numbers in the Old Testament." Tynd B 18 (1967):19-53.

Westermann, Claus. Creation. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971.

Westermann, Claus. The Genesis Account of Creation. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.

Whitaker, Arthur P. Latin America and the Enlightenment. New York: Cornell University Press, 1961.

Williamson, René de Visme. "The Theology of Liberation." Christianity Today (August 8, 1975):7-13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Wilmore, Gayrand S., and Cone, James H., eds. Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966-1979. New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

Wilson, J. A. "Egypt." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962. 2:56-65.

Winter, Derek. "Two Liberation Theologians in Vignette." The Asbury Seminarian 32 (1977):7-17.

Winter, Ralph, ed. The Evangelical Response to Bangkok. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973.

Wipfler, William. "How We Keep People Poor." The Witness (April 1977):8, 9.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Theory and Praxis." Christian Scholar's Review 9 (1980):317-334.

Woudstra, Marten H. "A Critique of Liberation Theology by a Cross-Culturalized Calvinist." Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 23 (1980):3-12.

Wright, G. Ernest. God Who Acts. Biblical Theology as Recital. London: SCM Press, 1952.

Wright, N. T. "Towards a Biblical View of Universalism." Themelios 4 (1979):54.

Wyatt, Roy B. "El libro del Éxodo. La obra más antigua de la teología de la liberación." Diálogo teológico 12 (1978):37-49.

Yoder, John Howard. "Discerning the Kingdom of God in the Struggles of the World." International Review of Mission 68 (1979):366-372.

Yoder, John Howard. "Exodus and Exile: The Two Faces of Liberation." Cross Currents 23 (1973):297-309.

Yoder, John Howard. Nevertheless. The Varieties of Religious Pacificm. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1971.

Yoder, John Howard. The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971.

Yoder, John Howard. The Politics of Jesus. Vicit Agnus Noster. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yoder, John Howard. "Probing the Meaning of Liberation." Sojourners (September 1976):27-29.

Young, Edward J. "The Call of Moses." Westminster Theological Journal 29 (1967):117-135.

Young, Edward J. "The Call of Moses. Part II." Westminster Theological Journal 30 (1968):1-23.

Young, Norman J. Creator, Creation, and Faith. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.

Zea, Leopoldo. Latin America and the World. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969.

Zea, Leopoldo. The Latin-American Mind. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

Zimmerli, Walter. Old Testament Theology in Outline. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.